University of Alberta

Primordial Identities and Processes of Recognition: The State of Quebec Nationalisms

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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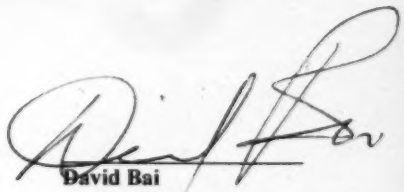

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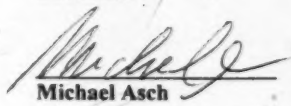

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the present-day predicament of nationalism in Quebec. Ethnographic examples from the 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum illustrate the difficulties of the dialogue that surround political and cultural expression in Quebec. By comparing recent ethnographies of Quebec nationalism and the contemporary cultural narratives surrounding the turmoil of identity in Quebec, this thesis demonstrates that political culture in Quebec, whether First Nations or Québécois, is rooted firmly in the quotidian activities of the people of the province, and is grounded in the everyday life of the participants.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Chapter One	A Simple Vision of Quebec Nationalism	5
Chapter Two	Traditionalising Quebec Nationalism	28
Chapter Three	A Short History of Nationalist Action	41
Chapter Four	Primordial Identities	60
Conclusion	Some Thoughts on Recognition	79
Bibliography		83

INTRODUCTION

In August of 1995 I returned to live in Quebec after an absence of two years. At that time, the people of the province were gearing up for their second sovereignty referendum in 15 years and immediately from my casual observations, I noticed differences in quotidian life. The vote was set for October 30, and extreme manifestations of cultural and political expression were ubiquitous within the province; political slogans hung from every lamppost and political rhetoric hung from every lip in the days before the referendum.

The formal political wrangling began in earnest on June 12, when the leaders of the Quebec nationalist parties joined together to pass a law in the *Assemblée Nationale*, to propose "a new economic and political treaty to Canada";[1] the wrangling rose to a heightened pace three weeks before the referendum, when polls indicated the "Yes-side" might win. The mandate that was being sought by the government of Quebec for sovereignty was to be accepted or rejected in a referendum by the people of Quebec, and support for the two sides were clearly divisible. The "Yes" campaign was supported almost exclusively by francophone Quebeckers, or the Québécois[2], and the "No-side" contained the vast majority of anglophones and allophones[3], and many francophones.

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[1] The offer of the new political and economic relationship with Canada herein means sovereignty for the nation of Quebec and its withdrawal or independence from the Federation of Canada. Although much has been said as to the meaning of the question of sovereignty within the referendum question itself, for this purpose I am assuming that most of the people who voted in Quebec were aware of the question and were informed voters – or, in the least, as informed as the political commentators and pundits who criticised the vote outside of Quebec.

[2] I am drawing a clear distinction in labelling who is Québécois and who is a Quebecker. I have never heard an anglophone being referred to, either in self-reference or by someone else, as a Québécois; however, it is not uncommon to hear a Québécois call themselves a Quebecker when they are speaking English. It has become increasingly common in the last few years, for English speaking Quebeckers to refer to themselves as "Canadians". Notice that the dichotomy is not exclusively French/English; the fact that the simple dichotomy is illustrative for certain points is important, but the greater importance lies in that the categories are not exclusive and can be appropriated through power and discourses.

[3] Generally the designation "allophone" means 'other' speaker, or not English or French speaking as a first language. In many uses, this term is pejorative in its reference to immigrant communities.

The answer to the referendum question polarised communities throughout the province of Quebec, and the reverberations were felt throughout the country. Exactly what was at issue in the referendum is debatable; but what is indisputable is that the referendum called into question the constitutional right of a cultural minority to express themselves politically, through the right to secede from the Federation of Canada. Ostensibly, the referendum was to reveal whether the people of Quebec wanted to create their own nation-state; however, the place of francophones in Canada, the future of a bilingual Canada, what would happen to the subsequent minority population in Quebec who voted against sovereignty after a "Yes" vote, and the recognition of the First Nations independent referenda, were the questions discussed most often by Quebeckers on the "No"-side and Canadians alike. Most talked about by the Québécois was their right to control their destiny, and their right to the perceived natural progression of achieving a modern nation-state. Although the referendum was billed as a democratic success, the limit of the choices for the vote did not portray an accurate description of the dialogue that existed at the time. What the referendum revealed about nationalism and what was at issue within Quebec during the referendum of 1995 will be introduced in the following pages.

The three months prior to the referendum witnessed many historically remarkable events, as well as subtle differences in the daily lives of most Québécois and Quebeckers. Although the scope of the differences that I witnessed in Montreal and throughout Quebec was enormous and easily recognisable, the gravity of their meaning were beyond my initial comprehension. The differences were only understandable after repeated exposure and many conversations with people from the areas of Montreal - particularly the South Shore, in and around Sherbrooke, and several students from around the country studying in Montreal -- who provided an interesting and informative outlook on the events. Although initially most people with whom I spoke responded that they did not want to talk about the referendum or Quebec nationalism because they were "sick of it," the subject was always present and never required any prodding to keep the conversation or, very frequently the argument, alive. It seemed that most people were as willing to speak about the

referendum as they were to speak about themselves; maybe this verbosity owed to the fact that people *were* speaking about themselves, but in the collective terms of their identity and how they viewed themselves, through their nation.

After spending the first few weeks of my return to Quebec in the Eastern Townships, and associating predominately with families whose first, if not only, language was French, I was surprised by the effect that the impending referendum was having on the people of Montreal, and particularly the English speaking people. This worrisome sentiment that they displayed perplexed me at the time; and this sentiment of national identity and "homelands" gave raise to this study.

What this thesis portrays is a representation of Quebec nationalism in an anthropological perspective surrounding the events of the 1995 sovereignty referendum. In portraying these events, I am demonstrating the mechanisms of cultural divisiveness and integration that are both present, simultaneously, within Quebec society. The question at the centre of this research is whether the study of Quebec nationalism through a semiotics analysis, as illustrated by Richard Handler (1984, 1988) holds true for my experience and analysis of Quebec nationalism in 1995. Secondly, following from this point, is the question of whether Handler's method of enquiry approaches an accurate representation of what is at issue within the self-determination movement in Quebec, and if this approach can be generalised to other movements in Canada. The semiotic approach purports that entities such as nations and societies are "the imaginative products of a world-view ... As such, they are not on-the-ground, natural, bounded, or absolute... but semiotic: symbolic objectifications which are continually, and discontinually, constructed in the present" (Handler 1984: 55).

The focus of this thesis is to make three small but important arguments about Quebec nationalism that I believe are missed in most representations, but are emphasised most explicitly in Handler's work. These arguments follow the chapters of the thesis and are constructed in relation to Handler's monograph, *Nationalism and the Politics*

of Culture in Quebec, while describing my fieldwork experience surrounding the Quebec referendum of 1995. These arguments are: 1) while extreme, rare social events such as referenda affect a people, the better representation is found in their quotidian interactions. Further, the Québécois identity in Montreal is built from a process of tension that establishes an historic tradition of self-definition. This definition is achieved in combination between what appears as two disparate sides - the English and the French - but in fact this identity is essentialised and incomplete for an accurate understanding of the diversity of Quebec society. 2) There are competing agencies in determining what is the identity of the Québécois; and, although there are dominant images of the traditional or so-called authentic identity, the view that projects the identity as homogeneous is a weak representation of how contemporary or historic Quebec society exists. 3) The context of Québécois identity in Montreal is constructed in a two-fold manner. First, in relation to those that are perceived to be the English[4]; and secondly, through the construction of narratives of aboriginality. Further to this point, I question the effect of the assertion that a nation is not "on-the-ground...but...symbolic" has on First Nations peoples' legitimate claims to self-determination.

Finally, I extrapolate from these arguments and the material that I present so as to draw an introductory parallel and enter the debate on minority rights, multiculturalism, pluralism and self-determination issues in Canada. Clearly there is a necessity to answer both levels of self-determination issues in Canada (i.e., both aboriginal and Québécois), and this paper culminates with a focus on this necessity.

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[4] The category "English" is defined as a simplification of who is not Québécois. In this light, the category includes English speaking Quebeckers, Native peoples, such as Mohawks, and minority immigrant communities; even the Quebeckers that are Canadian federalists and immigrant communities that are French speaking, such as Haitians, can fall into this category of 'English'.

CHAPTER ONE:
A Simple Vision of Quebec Nationalism

The most provocative anthropological account of contemporary Quebec nationalism was undertaken by Richard Handler through his fieldwork in Quebec during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Handler observed 'folk' events that depicted the image or imagination of traditional Québécois people, which he describes in his monograph *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (1988). He focuses his analysis on the events of the election of the sovereigntist *Parti Québécois* (PQ) government in 1976, leading up to the first sovereignty referendum in Quebec in 1980. He points to the creation of a national ideology through the objectification of tradition, an ideology that he equates with Québécois culture. His semiotic analysis is done by examining the formal presentation and objectification of traditional culture, through the mandate of Quebec's Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MAC); the political writings and speeches of Lionel Groulx and René Lévesque; and examples from the tourism industry, such as the presentation of traditional images in museums.

Handler's work continues to be useful for several reasons. Primarily, his work demonstrates the role of official discourse in unifying a people under the guise of the homogeneous nation. He accomplishes this feat by showing the processes that the official nationalist ideology imposes on a community. He is correct in arguing that for the people involved, the nation is about seeing themselves in a collective that is greater than the sum of the individuals; and that through time and experience, the collective is understood to have a life force of its own. The metaphor of the nation as a living individual is descriptive and understandable of how people place themselves within the nationalist situation in Quebec and national movements in general.

The point of departure for my analysis of contemporary Quebec nationalism is to examine the assertion that Quebec culture is a semiotic construct and not "on-the-ground", as Handler suggests (1984: 54-5). The initial question that I explore is whether Handler's semiotic representation of Québécois culture holds true to my observations of the most recent sovereignty referendum in 1995; that is, what are the

similarities and differences in our observations and analyses of Quebec nationalism that have occurred through time.

Handler's method of analysis has been taken to the forefront of current anthropological theory by the work of Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1991).[5] Anderson argues that nations are constructed by the imagination of a group of people to create a collective that is based on criteria that are somewhat forced. Although Anderson's argument is more subtle, and is delivered with considerable precision in the mechanisms of the genesis of nations, for him the nation is a recent invention that brings together a community under the guise of shared history and experience, cultural and ethnic similarities, and propinquity. Although most of the people within the nation will never meet, they share a common devotion to its idealised form. The nation building process is achieved through the advent of print capitalism and the ability of periodicals to enforce a collective experience on a people quickly. For him, the nation:

> is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.... It is *imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.... [It] is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.... It is imagined a *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.... Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson 1991: 6-7).

Like Anderson, Handler's work is cited consistently in contemporary accounts of nationalist identity in efforts to explain people's connection to their nation and the bit of the cloth that is their flag. Also, his work has been taken to the forefront of

[5] The first edition was published in 1983 but the text is more often cited in its second incarnation that was reworked and published in 1991.

contemporary anthropological work that questions the objectification process of anthropological inquiry and writing. In post-modern theory, he is considered a forerunner in articulating the critique of anthropological writing, by saying that the social sciences follow the same imaginative and then reifying process that nations do, in constructing identities. Melding the work of Anderson, Handler, and Durkheim is direct, as Robert Foster says:

> Anthropologists have discussed fruitfully Anderson's problem of imagining the national community in terms of rites and symbols, cultural forms and idioms 'through which different groups of the same society can pursue and manipulate their different fates within a coordinated framework'. Durkheim's fundamental insight in to the function of religious collective representations in generating a deeply felt sense of social cohesion continues to be applied, as Durkheim himself applied it, to the rites and symbols of nationhood – flags, parades, rallies, etc.. National elites, intellectuals and politicians, deploy such rites and symbols as solutions to a perceived problem of "integration," of instilling a heterogeneous population with a sense of shared national identity (Foster 1991: 239).

In light of Handler's prominence as a leading ethnographer and theoretician, I must ask, does his method provide a detailed insight into theorising nationalist movements and Quebec nationalism, specifically; and, what value is to be culled from his analysis in understanding the political culture of nationalism?

I will now explore Handler's argument in greater detail. First, I compare his introduction and the methodological outlook within which he frames *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* to my experience of the Quebec referendum in 1995. Secondly, in the next chapter, I examine what he calls the salient points of nationalism – where they are drawn from, and the significance that they have on the study of nationalist movements.

Handler (1988) begins his monograph by contextualising the spirit of the election of the *Parti Québécois* (PQ) in 1976, as a display of social and collective effervescence. Following Durkheim, Handler is setting the tone for his analysis, describing the

events as part of a mechanism to achieve social unity. He says, "the celebrations of a November 15 [1976] could be fairly likened to those states of collective effervescence that Durkheim imagined as central to the social order. Certainly the electricity was there, an electricity that lifts the assembled masses 'to an extraordinary degree of exaltation' (Handler 1988: 4). Invoking Durkheim's words to begin his account is telling of where he is going with his description. He is attempting to show the ideological and behavioural coherence of the Québécois, and that there are cultural mechanisms to integrate the community in sacred events of heightened emotion and meaning.

Handler begins his account of Quebec nationalism by describing the election of the PQ to power in 1976. He calls the euphoria surrounding the 1976 provincial election, when the PQ was first elected to power with a supposed mandate for separation, as a possible time when the collectivity of the Québécois was 'made and remade', through times of collective action and social effervescence (1988: 4).

The election of the PQ in 1976 was not a usual political event. This election marked a dramatic change in the operation of the separatist movement, and the methodology that people employed to mobilise their communities. However, the social order that was supposedly created and displayed in Quebec society, through collective effervescence, did not transcend beyond the arena of the political participants in the election of 1976. To this point, though, even with all of the emotion of the event, Handler claims that an outside observer "could have lived through those weeks with only the vaguest awareness of the unfolding political campaign, and with no sense at all of the discussion of national identity and destiny that accompanied it" (*ibid.*: 4). Handler checks his enthusiasm for the political and social exaltation, that he states is interpreted as "a renewal and rebirth of the collectivity" (*ibid.*: 4), by remarking that although there were impressive demonstrations of national pride surrounding the election, the activities themselves may have gone unnoticed by an outsider to the community. He says, "[d]aily life continued as usual during those weeks and … the Québécois seemed able to live their life as if nothing out of the ordinary were

occurring" (*ibid.*: 4). Although Handler abandons Durkheim, he quickly returns to him by stating that peoples' return to daily life is a key part to Durkheim's notion of the 'profane'. I argue that not wanting to abandon a Durkheimian method is key to the formulation that Handler ultimately presents as the representation of Quebec nationalism and his salient points of nationalism, in general.

My experience of the referendum almost 20 years after the PQ was first elected in 1976 supports Handler's use of Durkheim to describe his account of collective effervescence and ritual excitement (Durkheim 1988: 255). Moreover, what was different than Handler's description was the deep level of awareness. Truly in October of 1995, the electricity surrounding the referendum was so palpable that you could not have been in Quebec in the weeks prior to the vote and not been conscious of the vote itself – outsider or insider – an observation that is immediately different than Handler's. For the referendum, over 94% of the registered voters in the province turned out to vote. Likewise, political posturing was not limited to the mass media and political rallies. Slogans and sloganeers were as likely to be displayed and active in an *ad hoc* manner from individuals as from any formal institution, such as the media or political machinery. During this time, to be in Quebec was to be amidst the jousting of national identities; and the posturing of those identities occurred in every geographic and social space possible. Demonstrations and arguments were not so much separate events occurring spontaneously, but rather entire manifestations of identities which rose to the forefront of social interaction, in the last few weeks before the vote.

Sovereigntist Pride:

Three unique images stand out in my mind about Quebec in the months immediately preceding and following the referendum. Two weeks prior to the vote, the most sacred of all buildings in Quebec was filled to capacity and transformed into a cresting sea of nationalist blue, in celebration of and support for the nationalist sovereignty campaign. The Montreal Forum, then home to the Montreal Canadiens

hockey franchise, housed an exuberant crowd of politicians, artists, and citizens. That night, singers and poets that have represented Québécois folk traditions and much of their popular culture since the 1960s came together to support the nationalist cause, by hosting the celebration "*Les artistes pour la souveraineté*".[6] Many of the artists that performed had not appeared publicly for years; but for this special cause, the special opportunity of the referendum to celebrate the recognition of their own country, they reunited for an enormous political and social exhibition.

That evening I was one of the few people in attendance at the Forum who could not be labelled as Québécois. The political lines were clearly drawn for the spectacle, and the event was an extreme manifestation of cultural and political allegiance; drawing those who were in support of the sovereignty movement and excluding those who opposed it. The event was not a political rally as much as a paid cultural event that took place indoors and away from any happenstance meeting between the differing sides of the referendum-nationalism debate. Importantly, because the lines had been so firmly established for this one event, and there was no chance for any threat of interaction between the two polarised sides, the people in attendance were unabashedly jovial. Individuals or small groups of people spontaneously broke into the popular folk song, that some people say is the national anthem of Quebec, "*Gens du Pays*", and they were soon accompanied by thousands of others, including the performers and politicians in attendance, in an amazing exhibition of *camaraderie*.

Unlike the seemingly similar event, "*Poèmes et Chansons de la Résistance,*" that took place in 1968, membership at the 1995 event was authoritative and socially legitimate. Although both evenings brought together many of the same performers to promote Quebec nationalism, they marked the clear switch in the achievements of the nationalist movement. This switch is observed from the call to resistance in 1968 to a celebration of sovereignty in 1995, and is indicative of a movement that has attained legitimate power.

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[6] The artists in attendance included *Beau Domage*, Richard Saguin, Paul Piché, and many others.

In 1995, then Premier Jacques Parizeau and the then leader of the Official Opposition in the Canadian Parliament and future Premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, were in attendance. Alongside the political leaders were artists and bourgeoisie, academics and average citizens. This event was not socially radical or subversive, but instead demonstrated the authority the nationalist movement had gained.

In contrast, the 1968 performance was held in a small downtown theatre. It was held to popularise further the politically radical sovereignty movement, and to raise funds for the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) prisoners. It was put on by about 50 Québécois performers in a Montreal theatre, and the evening of poetry and folk songs was such a tremendous success that it was duplicated to sold-out performances around the province (Fournier 1984).[7] Since the election of the first PQ government in the late 1970s, the rhetoric of these new rallies and demonstrations has changed from a discourse of resistance to a discourse of authority, privilege, and legitimacy. The celebrations are now attended and led by the leaders of the government, and the events have taken on an air of formalised authoritative discourse.

Many of the young people in the audience in 1995 had their faces painted blue and white or had temporary *fleur des lys* tattoos painted on their cheeks. Some of these younger members banged and shook tambourines, blew whistles, and shouted songs of nationalist pride. Many, if not most, of the people carried a Quebec flag, in various sizes; buttons and stickers supporting the slogan "*Oui au changement*" and "QUÉBEC SOUVERAIN" were passed to all people in attendance so as to ensure that everyone was bedecked in the requisite *bleu et blanc* paraphernalia. People's allegiance to the "Yes" campaign was not left to question. Attendance to the massive three-hour ritual celebration was guaranteed to house supporters of the nationalist movement or to convert those whose decision had not been made by appealing to the people's memories, traditions, and obligations of and for the nation.

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[7] Of equal interest to those artists in attendance was one of the artists who did not appear 1995, but who had performed in 1968. Robert Charlebois claimed that the referendum was bad business for his new micro-brewery and he did not attend.

After the party had ended in the Forum, the festivities spilled outside and onto Ste-Catherines Street. As the thousands of us were milling about on the warm autumn night, I was struck by the emotion of the people with whom I spoke. Not surprisingly, the people with whom I spoke who were already devout sovereigntists thought the event was a beautiful statement of the mature culture of the Québécois. This concept was expressed to me as these people claimed and bragged how close they sat to Lucien Bouchard, as if they had finally procured a reservation at an exclusive restaurant. Of interest to me, however, were the responses from two women in attendance who were not vehement sovereignty supporters going into the evening, unlike most of the people there.

The first woman was in her mid-20s, and had moved back to Quebec some time earlier to attend university. Along with her family, when she was about five years old, she moved to a small prairie town in Alberta from the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Having spent 20 of her 25 years in rural Alberta but speaking French as her first language, she had always identified herself as a French-Canadian.

After the show, with the party still going on all around us on the street, she expressed to me that she had just "come home", and that the evening's festivities and emotion was inspiring. She explained that as she listened to the poets and singers perform, she heard her true identity being described. That night she decided to vote "Yes" in the referendum. Her decision was made so as to do her patriotic duty and to help Quebec achieve what she understood as its rightful political recognition as a nation.[8] She maintained this position throughout the political jousting of the referendum, although she reported that she was pulled by several members of her family to support either the "Yes" or "No" sides.

Not surprisingly, her family members that remained in Alberta pressed her for information during the referendum, and urged her to vote "no", to ensure the survival of the French language by keeping Quebec in Canada. The rest of her family, that

[8] For this definition of nation, this person equated the meaning of nation and state.

remained in Quebec, were split almost evenly between the two sides. They too played at her responsibilities to either Quebec or Canada; and recently she explained that the responsibilities to either one was mutually exclusive, according to her family. During the referendum, to be loyal to Canada was to be disloyal to Quebec.[9]

The second woman with whom I spoke was also from Alberta, but had been living in Montreal for several years because of her work as a nurse. She too described herself as a French-Canadian; but because of more permanent circumstances growing up in Alberta and being part of the larger francophone community in Edmonton, she often referred to herself as a Franco-Albertaine. The nurse came to the political event, mostly for social and cultural reasons. She attended the show to see the entertainers that her parents had raised her with, when she was a child, and whom she considered were standard francophone entertainers in Canada.

After the spectacle, she was despondent, as her identity as a francophone but not a Québécoise was brought to light. The performers she had enjoyed as a child suddenly became the representatives of a culture that was not quite her own anymore. In subsequent conversations, she explained to me that she had become extremely nervous during the show; and that same evening contacted her family in Western Canada to tell them that the "country was breaking-up." She informed her family that the referendum was dangerously close, but that "deep in her heart she knew the 'Yes-side' would win" because they had a confidence that was stunning. She was certain at this point she would have to leave Quebec after the "Yes-vote"; and she was concerned that with a "yes-vote" the French language and culture in the rest of Canada was in peril.

The third person with whom I spoke, immediately after *les artistes pour la souveraineté*, was jubilant. He was encouraged by the progress that the "Yes-side"

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[9] Of course, this loyalty issue is similar to what Jean Chrétien seems to face as Prime Minister of Canada.

had made since the 1980 referendum;[10] and excited by the process of Quebec finally demonstrating its "right to self-determination" in a legitimate and successful manner - or at least, he explained, the sovereigntists had shown the solidarity to gain a stronger position in federal negotiations. When I asked him if the referendum was about gaining independence for Quebec or about strengthening Quebec's position within the federation of Canada, he replied pragmatically that everything had to be done to ensure the survival of the Québécois people and there was no contradiction in voting "Yes" for independence but wanting to stay within Canada. Many political commentators have remarked on this seeming contradiction within the referendum question and voters' approach to it; particularly with respect to the exit polls from the referendum vote, where people commented that they voted "Yes" for independence but thought a "Yes" vote meant that Quebec would simultaneously still be part of Canada. This informant articulated that the referendum was about both Quebec independence and Quebec strengthening its position within the federation. Even though independence was the ultimate goal, this informant, like many others, viewed this action as a process and a series of steps towards that goal.

The Canadian State of Nationalism

The second event that stands out in my mind is the enormous federalist "No" rally that took place four days before the vote. Ironically, René Lévesque Boulevard was turned into the centre of the confluence for offensive Federalist identity. As the polls began to indicate that the referendum might swing in favour of the "Yes" side, thousands of frightened federalists converged in the downtown core of Montreal and rallied on the street named for the most famous Quebec sovereigntist, the late René Lévesque, who led the first "Yes-side" referendum campaign to defeat in 1980. Federalist supporters, donning provincial flags or the maple leaf, draped off of the signposts that read René Lévesque Boulevard, seemingly unaware of the contrast and the significance of Lévesque's frequent calls for the Québécois to be masters in their own home. On this day, the symbolic home of the leader of Quebec independence

[10] Even though he was only 12 at the time, he swears that he knew and understood the nuances of the referendum.

was not the master but rather the tool for federalists to see Prime Minister Jean Chrétien better as he plead for a united Canada.

Unlike the celebration of *les artistes pour la souveraineté*, described briefly above, this event left much to happenstance. The rally took place outdoors, and swept many more people into its mix than had intended to show their support for the Federalist cause. Even excluding the extra people who were there, attendance at the rally totalled well over 100,000 people, many of whom travelled from across the country to show their support for the Federation of Canada – and as many claimed, to show their love for Quebec. Profane clashes between people from both sides were inevitable, and scripted responses to the exchanges were not appropriate for the intense situation.[11]

The openness of this rally generated a much different feeling than the "Yes" event described above. The emotion of the crowd was feverish, as thousands of bodies pressed against one another on the streets of downtown Montreal. There was an excitement and energy from the people that demonstrated their militant devotion to Canada. This patriotic sentiment was heightened by the fear of the outcome of the vote, and led to a zealous fervour for political converts. Despite this fear, the people in attendance remained inclusive and positive, exhibiting a form of social imperialism by trying to integrate everyone they encountered into their mix. This kind of patriotism and emotion was new to the "No-side", as, historically, they were confident and secure atop their place in Quebec, and had remained distant and aloof. This time however, they were active and forceful in their actions for this one-time event, demonstrating not only the emotion of the situation but how they felt about the Canada and Quebec.

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[11] The National Film Board documentary, "Referendum Take-Two" filmed a wonderful example of one these exchanges with the then-President of the University of Alberta Student's Union, Terence Filywich. When Filiwych was asked why he was writing that he "Loved Quebec" on the street with chalk, he could not come up with an answer at all; and he appeared to be an ill-prepared ambassador for the rest of the country.

The first two events that I have listed appear to support Handler's use of Durkheim to describe and understand them. Both the "Yes" and "No" rallies were mechanisms to display and entrench the Quebec nationalist and Canadian federalist identities, and to integrate the specific group into a euphoric collective. *Les Artistes pour la Souveraineté* demonstrated the tremendous pull of emotion that the "Yes-side" invoked to promote their cause. Appealing to the collective history and events that the francophone people shared was a successful technique to promote change. The nationalists' appeal to the threatened homeland and the rightful place of the Québécois to be masters in their own home was a successful mix of emotion and idea of a natural progression to legitimate their claim.

The "No" or "Unity-rally" as it became called, drew on emotion too. The federalists drew upon metaphors that Canada was a family that needed to be kept together. They too argued for the natural state of their homeland of Canada, which they thought was being threatened. They claimed Canada's natural and historic state was bilingual and had 10 provinces; thus Quebec was a necessary part of their imagined community. Each event showed the pull of emotion attached to its cause; and how, for the people involved, the idea of their nation, group, or collective was a phenomenon that was more than simply symbolic, and was *on-the-ground* for the people involved.

Confusing the Issue: Non-Essentialist Thinking

The third example that I will now present also supports the notion that periodic events can make and remake the collectivity, but I take a different approach to analysing it. The third event took place months after the referendum, in late June of 1996. Every summer, Montreal hosts the largest Jazz Festival in the world, staged in the downtown core of Montreal. It begins directly in between Quebec's *Fête Nationale* on June 24 and Canada Day on July 1. The Montreal International Jazz Festival is an important and fun event in the cultural scene of Montreal. Economically, many tourists visit the city during this time and downtown hotels, restaurants, and bars are filled to capacity for the two weeks of the Festival. Many of the world's top musicians converge on the island of Montreal to share and display their work in

concert halls and on many of the free stages throughout the city, thus creating an accessible and entertaining gathering enjoyed by millions of people.

What was significant about the Jazz Festival in 1996 was that it provided a release valve for the social pressures of the proceeding months by integrating the polarised sides of the political debate in a (generally) non-political event. Moreover, the strategic timing of the festival, directly between the day of the Patron Saint of Quebec, St-Jean Baptiste's *Fête Nationale* on June 24, and the increasingly demonstrative Canada Day celebrations, on July 1, provided a necessary coupling for the two divided sides. Importantly, the *Fête Nationale* and Canada Day demonstrations take place within a week of each other every summer; but they are not normal behaviour, and they do not represent the relationship between the nationalists and the federalists fairly. These demonstrations get a tremendous amount of press attention, and they are presented so as to describe and represent relations within Montreal.

What is rarely mentioned, however, is that the Jazz Festival falls between each of these political events, and illustrates a very different image of social relationships in Montreal. This cultural event celebrates a process of the community that does not dilute the essentialised identity of either side; rather, and unromantically, it permits all members of the community to participate in the event without acquiescing to the other. On any given day, between 300,000-500,000 people attend the open air concerts and set aside the overt tension and discourses of defiance to participate in life, the way that it generally is generally lived in Montreal.

In 1996, though, the Jazz Festival also provided a social release valve for the tensions that still persisted from the referendum. The stresses of the referendum did not subside until this time, and through the event there was a palpable sigh of relief from the collective breath holding that started sometime in October. Particularly in one free concert attended by approximately 100,000 people to celebrate the music of Louis Armstrong, when a rendition of "It's a Wonderful World" began and soft

fireworks appeared in the background to represent the "colours of the rainbow," the crowd was silent and many people hugged and held each other as they enjoyed the show.

Clearly, these three events demonstrate an aspect of the collectivity making and remaking itself through processes of ritual integration. And, admittedly, the Durkheimian model shows the effect of collective effervescence and heightened sense of communal identity that could be termed sacred, if so desired. However, what collectivity was being made and remade through these rituals of public display? The essentialised Québécois identity was strengthened and secured in the renditions of the folk performances; and the pan-Canadian identity flourished in the fervour of the "No" rallies, when the continuity of that identity was threatened. Both of these events were funded by their respective state, and reflect an essentialised identity that is promoted by the official state ideology. Thus, is the use of Durkheim appropriate not only to describe but understand these events?

Regarding the *conscience collective* of the euphoric group, Durkheim says "[t]he totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinant system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience.... it is, by definition, diffuse in every reach of society" (Durkheim 1964: 79). Ulf Hannerz (1992) describes the problem of the Durkheimian model of the *conscience collective* as:

> I have pointed to the 'I know, and I know that everybody else knows, and I know that everybody else knows that everybody else knows' formula already. This is probably as close as one can get to demystifying the Durkheimian notion of 'collective consciousness,' an arrangement which takes meaning out of the domain of the individual whim to make it over into something more solid and real (1992: 68).

Neither the "Yes" or "No" rallies demonstrated the total social diffusion of the *conscience collective*; however, the Jazz Festival demonstrates a different identity being made and remade, the collectivity of the nationalists and the federalists in a

non-partisan community, with the same people involved. The very *function* of the "Yes" side manifestations was independence or at the least a stronger, separate, position within the federation - change; the *function* of the "No" demonstrations was unity for the federation - *status quo*; the final example, that of the Jazz Festival, *functioned* through participation to unite both sides of the political debate, as all members of the community were included in its solidarity. For each of these events, when they are described individually, their function to their community can be elucidated easily; however, attempting to explain them in a less homogenous context makes their simple function difficult to ascertain.

Following Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity" (1993: 121-33) and the emergent life form of the *conscience collective*, the approach to the function of rituals is understood *a priori* and in historic and contextual separation. In this vein, by attempting to find the solidarity and homogeneity of Québécois nationalist identity, Richard Handler misses the context of the political identity; that is, why it is manifested at that time and in that place. Touraine, in an important and recurring theme, says:

> Social movements are not exceptional and dramatic events: they lie permanently at the heart of social life. Those whose function is to maintain order agree – more or less grudgingly – to recognize that this is never absolute, that it is surrounded by innovation and deviation, by refusal and social movements... Social movements are not a marginal rejection of order, they are the central forces fighting one against the other to control the production of society by itself and the action of classes for the shaping of historicity (Touraine 1981: 29).

Examining Handler's use of Durkheim's idea of the sacred, I contend that these public rituals and displays of national identity were not mechanisms to make and remake the collectivity of the Québécois in the manner that Touraine describes; or at least not the reality of the diverse society that is the current make-up of Quebec. The political posturing of the political rallies was divisive and limiting, but it was not at the 'heart of social life.'

Examining ritual in the manner that Handler and Durkheim advocate removes people from how they act and relate to each other in their daily lives. In this manner, the sacred description of social life is actually a profane description of real life contexts in Quebec. As Murphy (1971) says, with respect to Durkheim,

> Ritual and the sacred do not express the solidarity of the social group nor do they symbolize the constraint of its norms upon the individual. Rather, they bridge the contradiction between norm and action and mediate the alienation of man from his fellow man (1971 : 243).

The reading of ritual in the Durkheimian model requires an understanding that social agents are fulfilling their role in a mechanistic system, as automatons abiding by the norms and the constraints of society (*ibid.*: 206-10). I would like to propose that we view ritual as expression and process, but to confuse the demonstration as agentless and apolitical assumes two thing.: First, that the movement or demonstration has somewhat of a life of its own; and secondly, that the people involved in the movement are homogeneous in thought, action, and identity. Durkheim's normative perspective of society and its unity is a priority for his understanding of functionalism. Handler's work falls prey to this assumption, and it is easy to understand why this is so. Extreme displays of ritual and identity presentation are obvious and ubiquitous, especially during nationalist-political rallies; however, "a movement cannot be grasped as a concrete ensemble" (Touraine 1981: 150). It is also vital to remember the intent of Murphy's words, quoted above, that social rituals, of which political manifestations are one, bridge the *dialectics of social life*.[12] This bridge is the focus of the following pages.

* * *

The primary problem of focusing research and analysis on the occasional overt public demonstration of ritual as an accurate (authoritative) account of cultural identity and relationship is that it hides quotidian activity in the background, and represents

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[12] I have chosen to refer to Robert Murphy's work throughout this text because in a footnote to his 1984 article in *Current Anthropology*, Handler says he owes a great indebtedness to Murphy's *Dialectics of Social Life*. Handler's reference to Murphy still strikes me as a complete misreading of the text.

cultural forms with a non-representative image. I am not intimating that ritual and ceremonial display are unimportant, but using them to represent a quintessential identity of a culture has the potential to distort reality. From that distortion it is easy to conclude that culture is not grounded.

Taking this argument to the extreme is the current research that focuses on the synthesis of relationships between cultural groups. Stewart and Shaw (1994) argue that "syncretism" is the situation in which two elements of two different historical traditions interact or combine into a synthesised form. This examination is designed to study culture contact as it leads to culture change, in a blending process that incorporates elements in a mechanical-like process. A process that is progressively more adaptive, as "syncretism/mixing = authenticity" within their schema (1994: 7).

Frequently syncretic analyses promote cultural exchange as a symbiotic, useful, and a functional relationship to incorporate change; and better yet provide a mechanism for adaptation to the social environment (*ibid.*: 1-12). Stewart and Shaw state that "within anthropology ... syncretism has been ascribed a neutral, and often positive, significance... An optimistic view has thereby emerged in post-modern anthropology in which syncretic processes are considered basic not only to religion and ritual but to the 'predicament of culture' in general" (1994: 1).

Importantly, Stewart and Shaw account for an antagonism to the synthesis of syncretism, what they term "anti-syncretism" (1994: 7). Anti-syncretic movements long for purity; and are demonstrative in nationalist movements throughout the world, where peoples are attempting to define their borders and affirm their identity, internally and externally (Ignatief 1993). This call for purity is a resistance movement that draws upon images and notions of historic purity, and a continuity of traditions that necessitates authenticity (Young 1995). Stewart and Shaw analyse the relationships of exchange through a discourse of syncretism and anti-syncretism. This relationship enables the examination of culture contact, perceptions of identities, movement of ideologies, agency of individuals, and institutional structures that

manifest themselves in and through the rhetoric of performance to achieve and acquire new cultural forms (1994: 6-9).

I find significant problems with this method of analysis. The effects of the search for purity in cultural forms are real; and most often, as history has shown us, the search, as it is embedded in political manoeuvring, is damaging to those who are considered to be impure. Through this analysis, Stewart and Shaw rationalise colonialism and imperialism under the audacious conclusion that the result of the spoils is an authentic culture. To understand the mechanisms involved in the complex situation of cultural tension requires a different method than what Stewart and Shaw offer.

An alternative manner to examine cultural conflict is to view the creation of cultural behaviour and norms as a process. In terms of nationalism, we still envision the nation as a homogeneous entity; and the primary reason that conflicts occur is because of external pressures on the homogenous form. By viewing the development of cultures as a process, rather than as essentialised and reified, these tensions become a democracy issue, couched in rights to self-determination and recognition.

In Kay B. Warren's introduction to *The Violence Within: Cultural and Political Opposition in Divided Nations* (1993), she states that it is the purpose of her text to examine how conflict and difference produces culture, rather than cultural differences producing conflict. Warren's perspective supports a significant switch in the examination of culture and the idea of what constitutes authentic culture than what I have presented from the work of Handler.

In my work on Quebec nationalism, and particularly my research on the island of Montreal, where the English-French dichotomy is ripe for a syncretic analysis, I have come to a similar conclusion as Warren, and shy away from the argument supported by Stewart and Shaw. Cultural identity must be examined from the relationship and interaction of different peoples. Thus, there is a need to re-examine the essentialised groups, such as in the work of Handler that I have described. Although there are

many examples of extreme division in Quebec and Montreal, presenting the situation in a diametric opposition, essentialises the relationship and makes it too simplistic as a form of analysis.

I believe that the daily life of Montreal, its cultural existence, is a result of conflict and negotiation and by the definition of syncretism/anti-syncretism, Montreal culture is clearly neither of such form. Montreal is more complex than a syncretism/anti-syncretism relationship. The argument that I have constructed to counter this simplistic analysis follows from personal experiences in Montreal such as the Jazz Festival and the representation of social relationships in the first bilingual Canadian play, *Balconville*.

In the beginning of the play *Balconville*, by David Fennario (1979), a character asks one of his neighbours in his French and English apartment complex "going anywhere this summer?". The other character responds in a thick French accent, " Balconville," in reference to the fact that he will be spending the summer vacationing on his balcony. This exchange sounds trite; but I have seen and lived the experience, and it is indicative of the quotidian life that people share. When people do not have the money to live in exclusive areas of Montreal, they are ghetto-ised into pockets of close contact. The division along class lines bisects the French/English dichotomy, and both sides are *forced* or choose to live with each other. During the unbearable mugginess of summer in the polluted city, people lounge on their balconies, drinking beer and wine, to such an extent that they refer their *balcons* as their vacation destination. Of course, because of the propinquity of the balconies, neighbours exchange stories about the Montreal Canadiens' season, the fate of the Expos; and maybe, if things are boring, they will talk about politics. This relationship is not anti-syncretic, although several people would like to portray the relationship as extremely divisive. The cultural differences, the code switching between English and French are easy, fluent, and most often non-confrontational; the product is a response to the differences through time.

Although the play Balconville is about dissent, conflict, and divisions within the English/French split in Montreal, the play dramatises something much more important. These 'two' perceived cultures are actually so closely intertwined that describing one without the other and without the historic and political context does damage to the actual circumstance[13]. Their existence is built, and necessarily so, by the flux of the situation that is created by the two "sides" relationship together. There is no identity without the opposition to dialogue. Not that there isn't a synthesis of cultural exchange. One must look no further than the bilingual play *Balconville*, or the bilingual work of Leonard Cohen's poetry, prose, and music to see examples of the two different peoples living together. But to follow the definition provided by Stewart and Shaw denies the history of colonisation and subjugation between the two sides. Further, claiming that these historic events have provided the world with a new creolised entity, and that that fact is desirable, justifies colonialism and imperialism. Once again, to illustrate this point, Hannerz provides this example; he says:

> I believe that there is room for a more optimistic view of the vitality of popular expressive forms in the Third World, at least if the Nigerian example is anything at all to go by. But, of course, these forms are by no means pure traditional Nigerian culture. The world system, rather than creating massive cultural homogeneity on a global scale, is replacing one diversity with another; and the new diversity is based relatively more on interrelations and less on autonomy... We must be aware that openness to foreign cultural influences need not involve only an impoverishment of local and national culture. It may give people access to technological and symbolic resources for dealing with their own ideas, managing their own culture, in new ways (Hannerz 1987: 555).

Of course, in relationships of culture contact the world over, the contact, may also *not* provide people with access to resources for dealing with their ideas.[14]

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[13] The perception of these categories of English and French are very real: but what people are included in them is a creative process, at times. See footnote no.3.

[14] Marshall Sahlins has a particularly dreadful take on the place of imperialism. He says: "there is a certain historiography that too often takes the 'great game' of imperialism as the only game in town. It is prepared to assume that history is made by the colonial masters, and all that needs to be known about

As well, but not as damaging as denying the effects of the history of colonialism, when dealing with Quebec again, this analysis assumes that Montreal and Quebec exists in this dichotomous form, a leap that denies a proper understanding of Quebec society. The best example to illustrate this process is the issue of referenda deciding the political future of Quebec. Although politicians such as Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard claim that referenda are the ultimate demonstration of democracy, in fact the entire process does violence to the complexity of the situation. Demanding that people answer one question to sum up all of the discourses surrounding their political allegiance, removes any notion of democracy from the process. In this way, the referendum, which is billed as a statement of democracy, funnels participation into it but disallows any creative discourse.[15]

At the outset of this paper I stated that the 1995 referendum question purported to be about Quebec independence; however, what people were discussing before the vote was a whole myriad of complex situations. These discussions ranged from the place of First Nations peoples and honouring their separate referenda, to the possibility of partitioning of Quebec. Nowhere in the referendum question[16] was there an option to discuss these concerns. In an essay entitled "The Referendum Syndrome," Saul (1997) describes referenda:

> Government-organized referenda offer the citizenry the eternally obvious answer to an eternally obvious choice. The choice is so obvious that it has often escaped our notice until it has been out before us, clear and neat, a perfect package to solve our problem. Government-organized referenda are inevitably constructed upon the

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the people's own social disposition, or even their 'subjectivity,' are the external disciplines imposed upon them: the colonial policies, enumeration, taxation, education..." (Sahlins 1994: 380)

[15] For example, I spoke with an instructor at a French speaking CEGEP (Junior College) after the vote. She complained that many of her students' votes had been spoiled because on their ballots, they crossed out the English section of the question. Of course, if this account is true, the students didn't follow the rules by making a mark outside the allotted spot; but as far as making a political statement, their message was clear – they wanted Quebec to be French, not bilingual.

[16] Acceptez-vous que le Québec devienne souverain après avoir offert formellement au Canada un nouveau partenariat économique et politique dans le cadre du projet de loi sur l'avenir du Québec et de l'entente signée le 12 juin 1995? Oui ou Non

Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new Economic and Political partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995? Yes or No

> naïveté of the people. Since the people are not naïve, the mechanism of a referendum is designed to create an all embracing internal logic which, by banishing the complexities of reality, to say nothing of the outside world imposes naïveté as if it were normal (Saul 1997: 247).

The manipulation and then the whittling down of the discourses into the strict monosyllabic answer of the referendum question is a continuation of the reified and absolute divisions discussed above; and then, having the official government parties (federal and provincial) chastise their citizenry as treasonous if they didn't help the requisite side, is blackmail in the name of patriotism. The referendum question does not capture the true picture of the dialogue or the negotiation of identity as seen in daily life. The question, or more so, the answers to the question paint the portrait of the situation in red and blue, when in fact the situation is as brilliant as a shade of grey.

Furthermore, although the examples from the preceding chapters demonstrate some of the divisiveness within Montreal and Quebec, what they do not mention is that at the end of each of these social events, and at the end of each day, people went home to their normal lives -- living and working with, married to, and friends with each other. Of course some of the experiences were more profound, and affected people's feelings and perspectives on the impending events of the approaching referendum more than others. The simple fact remains that the people of Quebec (anglo, franco, allophones, natives) may have serious political differences, and often these extreme political discourses and social manifestations are the representative identity of the culture; but, importantly, the society remained together and remains together, violence-free and generally respectful if not cordial to the opposite side(s) of the political debate.

It is an important statement of democracy that dissenting opinions can be voiced. The issue then becomes that the dissenting voices are heard in their bid for change and recognition. By essentialising identities and simplifying the context of situations, dialogue and discourse becomes censored; and people become subjects of the dominant propaganda. In studies of nationalism, this technique is easy to understand.

Durkheim and Handler must be credited for their analysis, as they demonstrate effectively the role of the state in these matters. It is the responsibility of anthropology to examine how people deal with this statist propaganda.

CHAPTER TWO:
Traditionalising Quebec Nationalism

I will now introduce the second component of Handler's description of Quebec nationalism relevant to this discussion, what he terms the "salient presuppositions of nationalist ideology" (1988: 50-1). Combined with the methodological approach that I examined above, the salient features are the most important aspects of his work. The object of his enquiry, as outlined in the previous chapter, determines the results that he lists as the salient features. Handler says that "salience suggests that the features selected for analysis are pragmatically forceful and suasive, and that they engage active interpreters... To speak of salient features establishes sociological relevance without grounding that relevance in a bounded ideology or society" (1988: 31). By showing the integrated group aspect of Quebec nationalism applied through a Durkheimian paradigm, he is then able to generalise from his experiences to list five "presuppositions of nationalist ideology." I will now introduce his five salient features, and compare them to the literature of nationalism. Salient features number one, three, and four inspire the discussion and provide the backdrop for chapter four of this paper; salient feature five provides the same function for chapter three. Salient feature number two is discussed below.

The first salient feature of nationalism, Handler claims, is "a variety of Western individualism, the dominant, encompassing ideology of modern societies" (*ibid.*: 50). He says, "[n]ationalism is an ideology of individuated being... A living individual is one, precisely delineated with reference to a spatial and temporal environment. In other words, it is bounded in space, continuous in time, and homogeneous within those spatiotemporal boundaries." That is, Handler claims that a nation is a collection of individuals, that join to form an individual entity, that is separate and unique with respect to other groups.

In Western philosophical discourse, the individual is self-conscious, wilful, and aware of others through phenomenological differences; and other individuals recognise the

self-aware individual through similar, dialogical processes. In national terms, the individual nation is demarcated in time, space, and culture. It is recognised as being distinct from other nations, through attachments to geographic space, history, and cultural practices and monuments. Examples of these characteristcs are religion, language, and museums (Handler 1991). In terms of Quebec, Handler argues that individual Québécois are Québécois in their essence, which aligns the individuals to their nation, and distinguishes the nation from other nations (1988: 50-1).

In earlier work, Handler (1984) argues that a nation is a "thing," based upon the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and his postulations of what a thing actually is. Taking from Heidegger, Handler says that a thing, and here we can read 'nation,' is "framed by time and space, and the bearer of properties" (1984: 58). Clearly, Heidegger's characteristics of a thing has informed Handler's definition and understanding of a nation. Combined with the earlier quotation from Durkheim, defining the *conscience collective* as forming a "determinant system which has its own life", the ramifications of these assumptions are interesting.

Seemingly, the most important ramification is the idea of purity of identity within the discreet and bounded entity of the nation. Given the plurality of societies, I am curious how the process of homogenisation is achieved, so as to present seemingly disparate peoples as the same in their essence? To answer this question, Handler says that metaphors *establish* the individual nation. The three metaphors that he lists imply a fixed national identity, stemming from their essence; and he argues that they function to create the nation. It is important to remember that at the outset, Handler asserts that nations, groups, and communities are symbolic in their composition; and are not grounded in concrete terms. Thus through the use of metaphors, he demonstrates their genesis as social imaginations. The metaphors he lists are: 1) the individual nation has free will, choice, and the ability to act; 2) the national species metonymically equates individual and group, and the traits of the individuals define the nation as natural; 3) and finally, the previous metaphors of will, choice, action,

and natural existence, combine to provide a uniqueness and continuity of the group's life (1988: 46-7; 50-1).

Handler's ideas here are very demonstrative of the finished process, or presentation, of nationalisms. He is correct in demonstrating that nationalist movements are founded around myths and metaphors of historic time and familial extensions. More so, though, he does capture the organic basis of the movements, by showing the naturalised understanding and relationship of people and peoples to their lives.

What Handler has missed in this analysis, however, is that these metaphors present and possibly even promote the image of purity in identity; but is the appearance of homogeneity and homogeneity the same thing? The answer to this question must be a resounding "no." Quebec nationalism is about homogeneity, but the Quebec nation is not homogeneous. The slight semantic difference speaks to the mechanism that Handler fails to take into account in his depiction of Quebec nationalism.

For example, through the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MAC) and the *Conseil de la langue française* the official doctrine presents an image of homogeneity; but it is able to carry out this effective narrative of identity for two reasons. The people of Quebec chose to use these narratives creatively, to suit their needs in their political relationship within Quebec and within the rest of Canada. Secondly, the state controls the discourse through propaganda that is a function of legitimate power and control. The Quebec government now holds the role of the state in this promotion, a role that it has usurped from the church.[17]

However, to assert as Handler does, that the metaphors used in official state-discourse, or, that any metaphors create the people is a dehumanising suggestion; and assumes, as Handler has already stated, that the culture is not an 'on-the-ground' phenomenon. A more reasonable understanding of the use of metaphor says that

[17] Handler says that this process of projecting a reified cultural form is mimicked in anthropological analyses (1988: 1991).

metaphors make a new and figurative use of a relationship that already exists (Turner 1991: 124).

Handler's second salient feature of nationalism is that "individual being is defined in terms of choice and property." In this manner, Handler argues that choice is necessary for an individual, as it is "the creative manifestation of self, the imposition of self onto the external world"; and ownership is what comes from choice, it is what the members of a nation "have," in the external world, and is owned outright, autonomously (1988: 51).

To illustrate the projection of personality or essence to this point, Réne Lévesque (1968) describes the Québécois' connection with the land and the Québécois personality that is uniquely associated to it:

> We are Québécois.
>
> What this means first and foremost ... is that we are attached to this one corner of the earth where we can be completely ourselves: this Quebec, the only place where we have the unmistakable feeling that "here we can be really at home" ....
>
> We are children of that society, in which the *habitant*, our father or grandfather, was still the key citizen.... More is involved here than simple intellectual certainty. This is a physical fact. To be unable to live as ourselves, as we should live, in our own language and according to our own ways, would be like living without an arm or a leg - or perhaps a heart.
>
> Unless, of course, we agreed to give in little by little, in a decline which, as in cases of pernicious anemia, would cause life to slowly slip away from the patient. Again, in order not to perceive this, one has to be among the *déracinés*, the uprooted or cut-off (1968: 14-5).

Handler (1988) uses a section of this quotation from Lévesque to exemplify several of his characteristics of the 'salient features' of nationalism. In this quotation, Lévesque demonstrates the Québécois connection to the land, the spatio-temporal boundary; and then shows the personality that stems from being locked into that time and space. Lastly, the quotation ends with the natural metaphor of a species in decline and being

threatened with death. Lévesque's articulation of the Québécois claim to the homeland provides a primacy in the pecking order of who came first, for the Québécois.

In his analysis, Handler ignores the material connection to the land, and the metaphors that extend from the connection. He simply assumes that the metaphors are the culture, rather than the manifestation of the cultural form that Turner argues is the use of metaphor in these types of narratives.

The second aspect of this feature, that nationalism is a variety of Western individualism, is equally interesting to his understanding of nationalism. In an article titled "Who owns the past" (1991), published after his book on Quebec nationalism. Handler outlines the process for this assertion more clearly. He argues that the modern nation is determined by three processes. The first is that the nation is self-contained, as I have discussed in the first salient feature. The next characteristic of the modern nation is the process of ceaseless growth (*ibid.*: 65). Because the notion of the individual nation was born in the age of Enlightenment, the development process is always incomplete. This characteristic will be discussed in more detail as Handler's fifth salient point. Finally, the nation, like an individual, is defined by its acquisition of property.

According to Handler, John Locke argues that civil society is defined by its acquisitions and private property (1991: 65). Handler then extends this argument to the nation. He says that the national acquisition of property, which is housed in museums or is erected in monuments, determine its existence (*ibid.*: 67). For Handler, people rally around these images and physical monuments to become part of the collective group, which is then imagined as a nation (*ibid.*: 66). In this sense, property is not restricted to material property but also symbolic property, such as the ability to own history. Thus we get a better understanding of why Handler's monograph on Quebec culture focuses on the reified cultural forms that are promoted by the tourism industry, museums, and the official image projected by the state.

These industries all function in the production of cultural property; and for Handler, their existence satisfies the existence of the nation.

What is important in this feature for Handler, is that the choice of the nation is determined by its essence. The people can not choose what they naturally are; and moreover, to choose something else would make them into something other than Québécois. Choice, in this manner, is a function of being or existence; and the being stems directly from the spatial-temporal boundary and history. Thus, the understanding and use of choice, here, is a bit slippery - a *predetermined choice* is not a choice at all. This assertion is also very important to Handler's description. Pigeon-holing people into a cultural or national personality and then contending that if they act differently than the expected norms, severely limits the agency of the people; in other words, the norms of the culture or nation are so firmly entrenched that people have no agency to act outside of their restrictions.

This statement leads to Handler's third feature, the notion that the content or characteristics of the culture are subordinate to the existence of the entity. In an inversion of Durkheim's dictum regarding the function institutions play in a society, not the form that they carry, Handler says that the traits of a culture do not define the culture; rather, he contends, the process must begin from a faith that the entity exists, *a priori*. This concept means that the contents or traits of the culture are not fixed and open to dispute, but what is indisputable is that the nation exists. The traits follow from the nation, whose existence as a bounded, natural entity is unquestionable. This idea is supported by ministries such as *l'Office de la langue française*, whereby they decide the cultural nuances of language; and their charge is based upon the premise that there is such a thing as genuine Québécois culture.[18]

During my time in Montreal and my visits throughout Quebec, I saw this process of creative inclusion/exclusion occur. As individuals saw fit, they chose to create

[18] For example, last year in Quebec four children's names were disallowed by the offical registrar for being "inappropriate in a French setting".

categories to include or exclude others from their national identity; and several times I was the one being excluded or included. Because of my interest in nationalism, which became understood that I was interested in the "nationalist cause," I was told by a couple of long-time péquists, and heavy financial supporters of the separatist movement, that I would make a very good Québécois. I was interested and knowledgeable about the history of the people of Quebec, and I carried with me a modicum of knowledge about political expression and culture. These factors were enough to suspend the rigid criteria that Handler's informants say being a Québécois entails, in order to include me into the community. My experience strengthens Handler's argument that the nation is not an entirely fixed entity but is negotiable, and that national characteristics and members follow from the existence of the nation itself. This point is vital, and the questions that arise from it make the basis of chapter four.

Handler's fourth salient feature reads that the "nation is a natural entity ... and is fixed by natural processes" (1988: 51). In discourses of national and cultural identity, examples of the natural form are ubiquitous. From the breadth of these narratives, there is a seemingly necessary need to naturalise our social existence (Conner 1994: 120-1). The promotion of this natural image as a legitimate and fixed identity is an indicator of the success of the narratives and the authority of those who are presenting. As Foster (1991) correctly states,

> the notion of a nation with a fixed, 'given' cultural identity is a sign of the success of a whole array of practices in naturalising that identity. It is also the sign of the success of a particular construction or version of national culture, for all definitions of the national essence selectively ignore competing definitions. They establish themselves as 'doxic' – or fail to do so – through overcoming confrontation and creating 'citizens' whose very subjectivity is constituted as one aspect of the practices that reproduce and naturalize national culture (1991: 238).

The naturalisation process also speaks to the promotion or appearance of homogeneity. The narratives of natural existence, such as growth, maturation, death,

race, *etc.*, may be seen as a mechanism to generate the natural order of things. In the post-modern times of intense globalisation and transnationalism, people and peoples are questioning identities and relationships (Ahmed 1995). It is during these times of uncertainty and contention that "fixity" of identity is sought and reinforced in social situations, as comprehensible and recognisable identities are yearned for in times of instability and disruption (Young 1995: 4). However, fixity necessitates a recognisable difference, a difference that is generated through the perception of phenomena and reified through power structures in social relationships. Ahmed contends that the process of creating ethnic boundaries and enforcing them is a form of ethnic cleansing in an attempt to generate order (1995: 13). I believe the issue of a fixed cultural identity is a modern issue, not a post-modern debate.

This leap is a total ideological false consciousness -- as the social ramifications of this belief permits the rationalisation and ideological justification to the imposition of arbitrary rules on subordinate people and peoples within a society. The order that is desired has real consequences; and to place Quebec within this framework would, at best, accept the top-down promotion of identity that Handler describes; and at worst, justify creating ethnic boundaries, to create order. The reference to ideology and the issue of naturalising social relationships becomes evident again when I speak of primordial narratives of identity in chapter four.

The initial critique of this idea comes in many forms. First, the Québécois' will must be shown to exist homogeneously if it is to have stemmed naturally; but this is clearly not the case. Even if one is to accept my narrow definition of a Québécois, there is not unanimous thought and action amongst them to support this essentialised stance. For example, in the most recent referendum, one of the reasons for the "Yes" failure was because the voters in rural, predominantly French-speaking Quebec did not vote *en bloc* for the "Yes" campaign; and historically, sovereigntists have employed several different tactics to achieve the same end of cultural survival, although they had completely different ideologically-driven methods. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, members of the *Front de Libération du Quebec* (FLQ) were

disappointed with the democratic system, thus they employed a radical method for political mobilisation; and presently, the PQ and BQ follow a democratic method to achieve some of the same goals as the FLQ. There is not a unanimous will amongst the Québécois. Moreover for this assertion to have any credence, the First Nations, anglophone, and allophone populations can not be included in the community of the Québécois, thus denying the reality of the present make-up of Quebec society. Also, Handler's idea ignores agency and denies creativity to the Québécois, by masking the different attempts and beliefs to enact change into a single manufactured identity.

In political processes, the examples of symbolic identity are enormous (Cohen 1979: 87-89). Images and identities, such as political empires built through natural processes of domination, are alluded to; and through time this reference is a factor in the continual process of building an image of attitude and reference (Said 1993). Thus, the metaphors of the national species as continuous, bounded, and homogeneous are illustrative of the process of nation building, similar to the historical empire building described by Said; however, an image of a nation, such as a demarcation on a map, and nation itself are different things. The latter refers to the processes of how people interact, relate, and live their lives. The nation is a tool for how people make sense of, and describe themselves within, their contemporary circumstances – of which, the circumstances are very much 'on-the-ground' for the people involved.

Handler's final salient point, number five, follows the metaphor of the nation as being a natural entity to its logical completion. The national being is always threatened by the pollution, or degradation of its pure form. The nation is always under the ultimate threat, the death of the organism. The greatest security for the nation to secure its future in its idealised, pure form is through autonomy. In Quebec, this genuine threat of cultural extinction is shown through the historically-occurring metaphor for the Québécois to be masters in their own home. This narrative illustrates the desire for agency and action, and the history of subjugation that French-speaking people in Quebec face. There is a threatened posture of the Québécois identity in relation to

others. This posture stems from the history of ill-will in their relationship with the rest of Canada, and the pragmatic situation of the French culture being dwarfed by the dominant anglo majority in North America.

I began this chapter with the work of Anderson (1991) and the notion of the imagined community. To reiterate, Anderson says that nations are imagined communities because people have an enormously strong communion with their compatriots, although they will never meet them. They share the idea of community through shared experience, a process that has been made possible by technological advancements to ensure uniformity in experience. Necessarily this process occurs from the top-down, either through state discourse or the capitalist expansion of the media.

Handler's account of Quebec nationalism continues Anderson's argument in two ways. First, he argues that national identity, at least in Quebec, is created in a top-down manner that is consumed and acted out by the average citizen after it is produced by government agencies, politicians, and other reifying institutions (1984: 60-2). Secondly, he says that the connection of the people within the nation is created and strengthened by the organic metaphor of the collective individual, bounded in time and space (1988: 50). Handler is not concerned with historic or contemporary reasons for the narrative of Québécois nationalism, the posturing of the identity as a "natural thing" in relation to their political context; rather, he assumes that the objectified traditional culture of the tourism and museum industry is an accurate reflection of Québécois identity. For example, he says:

> I carried on such an attempt through two standard techniques, on the one hand eliciting and examining statements (both official and unofficial) about national identity, on the other hand seeking out situations in which Quebecois might act out their identity... I interviewed informants, talked with friends, and read literary, social-scientific, and propagandist accounts of national identity... I gradually turned from political debates, rallies, and ceremonies to events considered recreational or cultural (in the popular sense of the word,

> implying "refined" pursuits unrelated to the more practical facts of economics and politics) (1984: 58).

Importantly, Handler's methodology precludes him from examining why and how the national identity became manifest in the form that he recorded during his fieldwork. Admittedly, he was not interested in the mechanisms that brought the identity to its form; but rather in the theory and practice of objectification, and the property that stems from it. Handler says, "I make no claim to have said all there is to say about Quebecois nationalism; my purpose was to examine one aspect of nationalist ideology – objectification – in order to learn something about objectification within anthropological theory" (1984: 70). Further, Handler does say, "Here I intentionally correlate actors' desires with and observer's epistemology...." (1988: 7). However, Handler does title his monograph on the subject of Quebec nationalism, *Nationalism and Politics of Culture in Quebec*; and, oddly, only the propaganda of formalised national political identity weighs into his evaluation. He does not address the politics and power relations of the identity, only the top-down representation of it, as sufficient means to understand Quebec political culture. By searching for anthropological theory rather than contextualising the situation in Quebec, he does an injustice to what is at issue for the people involved.

Handler has been criticised for this approach of favouring the formal presentation of the national identity. As Delfendahl states with respect to Handler's work, "propaganda is not necessarily naïve" (1984: 65); but Handler seems to miss this important variable by assuming that it is. Delfendahl says, "Even the most dull-witted of Handler's Québécois – for he seems to credit them with little understanding of what they're about – surely recognizes that a toy or a tool in a child's or peasant's hand is not treated in the same way as in a museum" (*ibid.*: 65).

Further to this point of criticising Handler's methodology, Arcand says:

> Handler's choice of informants determines the success of his demonstration. His interest in the discourse of politicians, mass media, and people in the tourist trade seems oblivious of the fact that

> these are all true professionals in the creation of rarefied, stereotyped, and artificial visions of reality. The real questions are whether Québécois believe any of this and why such rhetoric appears at this particular place and time in history (1984: 64).

Admittedly, Handler's focus is not the history of power relationships; but he does contend that a salient presupposition of nationalism is that the nation is threatened, thus directly placing the national entity into a context of power. Unfortunately, he does not pursue this context in general terms or in the specific case of the Québécois. There is a very real consequence to this simplification of identity presentation that Handler pursues by his method. It gives a skewed version of a muddied problem by limiting competing discourses from the situation. For example, Handler did his fieldwork in Quebec city, having determined that he would find the 'real' Quebec there; and in contrast Montreal was out of the question as a research site because it was too cosmopolitan and wouldn't reflect the true image of Quebec (1988: 176).

In this essentialised form, identity creation is no longer dialogical but rather a monologue presentation, through the imposition of state propaganda. Handler tries to overcome this lack of context in his fifth salient feature, through his discussion of pollution and even death of the organic-nation; this feature *could* place Quebec within the historic context of its relationship with the rest of Canada, but his approach once again limits the opposition of competing visions of culture to a metaphor of threatened existence.

Regardless of the shortcomings of the analysis, Handler's work on Quebec nationalism is important because of the manner that he has articulated the nation as a collection of individuals and as an individual collective. Also, his focus has conveyed the necessity to examine Quebec nationalism through an anthropological methodology. In essence he has begun a necessary discussion in a meaningful fashion.

The following chapters retain the descriptive focus of Handler's work, but this thesis is not only a simple analysis of these arguments. The situation in Quebec requires

more than a description of the events of nationalism as established through metaphors. It requires a discussion of the effects of the traditional Québécois image -- what does it afford the Québécois to be considered *les habitants* and born of the soil? What is the effect of this traditionalisation? And what is the effect of the Québécois claiming that they are a "modern" nation, capable of exercising the narrative of being masters in their own home. The ramifications of these narratives of identity are more profound than the simple metaphors that Handler suggests.

In the next chapter, I approach Quebec nationalism from a non-symbolic perspective; and discuss the history of the nationalist narratives and the ramifications of that posture. As I argue in the following pages, there is a rich history in the relationship of Québécois nationalism with the rest of Canada; and the identity of the Quebec nation depends on the posturing of the modern national identity in democratic political action. The fourth chapter explores how primordial narratives shape the ideology of the Québécois people and thus their identity.

CHAPTER THREE:
A Short History of Nationalist Action

In the introduction, I began with a quotation from Handler's work that defines his understanding of culture as a semiotic construct. He said that peoples' self-referential designate, such as "society and culture ... are imaginative products of a worldview ... [and] as such they are not on-the-ground ... but are symbolic objectifications" (1984: 55). I then introduced Benedict Anderson's description of the modern nation (1991), to demonstrate the process of top-down identity formation in nationalist movements. What was deemed missing from Handler's analysis was similar to Anderson's formulation, in that he did not allow for a Québécois identity that ran counter to the official doctrine. In essence, the title of his monograph, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, is false advertising – his analysis has failed to demonstrate the political context of the Québécois identity; furthermore, his analysis does not allow for agency or change within its described parameters. Had Handler read Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and followed how the nation is imagined through the technological advancements; and the advent of print capitalism, to enforce a hegemonic experience and foster a national consciousness on a group, maybe he would have contextualised the political situation of Quebec nationalism better. He could have then focused on the top-down experience of official state cultural identity without removing agency from the people within the nation.

In the previous chapter, I introduced Handler's salient features of Quebec nationalism. In a Durkheimian vein, Handler presents five features of Quebec nationalism that can be generalised into greater presuppositions of nationalist movements. I argued, in turn, that his self-described semiotic analysis relies too heavily on a notion of a homogeneous Québécois identity; and his support for Durkheim does not allow for agency within the practice of social roles; although at times, in my experience, as in his, I witnessed displays of the *conscience collective*, where the collective presence of the group seemed to exceed the sum of the individuals present.

Addressing the work of Anderson and Handler is Herzfeld's, *Cultural Intimacies: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (1997). Although Herzfeld follows Anderson's and Handler's arguments, he takes them both in slightly different directions. Herzfeld chooses to expand the idea of *Imagined Communities* to include *all* communities, not just nations. He says:

> This insistent parallelism with a community of familiar faces is the basis of Anderson's image of the nationalist goal as an 'imagined community'. But this justly celebrated formulation requires at least two modifications. First, the metonymic extension of 'those we know' to include a huge population is not confined to nation-states. Perhaps people everywhere use the familiar building blocks of body, family, and kinship to make sense of larger entities.... The second modification of Anderson's thesis concerns its top-down formulation.... It says, in effect, that ordinary people have no impact on the form of their local nationalism: they are only followers (*ibid.*: 5-6).

And, with respect to Handler, in a chapter titled "The Danger of the Metaphor", he says:

> ... it makes little sense to say that something is (or is not) a metaphor. What happens is that the metaphorical basis of the labels we give all entities is pushed into the background. Nationalism is a doctrine of reification. In its usual terms, a nation either exists or does not exist: reality, constituted in these uncompromising terms, generates other, counterposed realities of a similar order.... The parallels among levels of social identification must be studied ethnographically. They do not ordinarily appear in the official pronouncements of the bureaucracy, the political parties, or the national media. They are nonetheless vitally important if we are to understand the perspective of those whose loyalty the state seeks to command (Herzfeld 1997: 80-1).

Although in this first quotation, Herzfeld is referencing Anderson, he also specifically lumps Handler into this second modification. Thus, following this criticism, and then his call to study the reality of the processes within the social and political context that the image of national identity is performed, we have an improved method for understanding Quebec nationalism.

In *Current Anthropology's* "Comment" on Handler's analysis of Quebec nationalism, Pilon-Lê (1984) says, "the author's insistence on analysing this top-down ideology without any historic reference conceals what is really at stake in Quebec society, how this ideology came to be dominant, and by what kinds of mechanisms it maintains its domination" (1984: 67). In light of this criticism, in this chapter I focus on the recent history of social actors and social roles in Quebec nationalism to demonstrate the ideological competition for identity creation that exists. What I am proposing is a different way to conceptualise and ultimately analyse Quebec nationalism than what is offered in Handler's work. Melding Herzfeld's suggestion to look at the formation of communities differently, with Gramsci's assertion (1988) that ideology is forged by actors, I will now examine the identity of the nationalist movement, focussing on agency.

To begin the chapter, I have chosen to discuss the post-Quiet Revolution time period, extending to the October Crisis of 1970, because this historic frame is generally understood as the genesis of aggressive Québécois nationalism (Roussopoulos 1972). Secondly, I will introduce the democratic-political era following the October Crisis; namely, the rise of the *Parti Québécois* (PQ), leading up to the time of Handler's analysis, which is the election of the first PQ government in 1976 and the first sovereignty referendum in 1980.[19]

The time period beginning in the late 1950s to the early 1960s in Quebec has been termed the Quiet Revolution. In historic and biographical accounts, this period is termed "revolutionary" as such because of the break from the centrality of the Catholic church and the strengthening of the socialist movements in the industrialisation of Quebec society (Posgate and McRoberts 1976). This time has also been noted as the point of Quebec's modernisation and political maturation, terms suggesting a pinnacle of social organisation; but in this instance, they imply the relationship between the people of Quebec and their sense of historic time, culture

[19] For discussions that focus on the political and economic period before this time, see Denton 1966; Ouellet 1980; Verney 1984. For a detailed discussion on the history of constitutionalism in Canada, see Russell 1992.

change, and association with the establishment of nationalist institutions and the population's migration from rural to urban Quebec. This is a self-referential identity, as described by Conner (1994) and indicative of nationalist movements throughout the world. Identity creation in this form is vital in expressing the image within and outside the culture; in Quebec's case, this process meant establishing itself as a [redacted] and distinct cultural entity in North America, and in Canada particularly.

An example to illustrate the structural process and change of cultural self-identity is the political leaders' conscious, premeditated plan of creating and articulating their new cultural form. Although a "culture" was present before the Quiet Revolution, the late 1950s and early 1960s marked the beginning of a new political process, instituted by secular leaders within the democratic political system, such as René Lévesque as a member of the Liberal Party and then the PQ; and also those who acted from outside the traditional political system, such as the members of the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) terrorists, to define and promote the Québécois identity in North America. These actors within the greater movement of national self-consciousness switched their internal and external projections of self-identity from French-Canadian to Québécois (or from French-Canadian nationalist to separatist).[20] This process satisfied many of the criteria for being recognised as a nation, such as the secularisation of the state, the formation of national institutions such as Hydro-Québec, and securing the French language as the language of the government and business (Bratt-Paulston 1987).

Keen examples of this promotion are seen in the book, *Nègres blanc d'Amérique* (Vallières 1969). Pierre Vallières' autobiography was written while he was in prison in New York, after he had attempted to take what he considered to be 'the cause' of the Québécois to the United Nations. In his autobiography, he states:

> I am neither a scholar nor an accredited philosopher. I am only a proletarian who has had the good fortune to read a great deal (but without method, since there was no money to buy method at a

[20] At this time, the distinction of the Québécois from French-Canadian fractured the francophone communities outside of Quebec. As I described in the first chapter, the effects were seen as a realisation of franco-Albertan, franco-Ontario, *etc.* communities.

> university) and who has also had the opportunity to act, who is acting and wants to go on acting. For whom it is enough to be honest with himself and to try, as best he can, to put his convictions into practice (1971: 12).
>
> But how can we, the niggers, who are the ones most deprived (materially, intellectually, technically) of the means of conquering power and keeping it, how can we hope to overcome the greatest economic, political, and military power in the world, overthrow imperialism, and found a new society on a completely different basis from that of our present society...? (*ibid.*: 53).

Obviously, Vallières is demonstrating the plight of the Québécois through the parallel to African-Americans. By terming the Québécois people as 'white niggers,' he is demonstrating their social context of subjugation, and also making a militant reference to the 'Black Power' movement.

In wider Quebec society, the Quiet Revolution set out to de-emphasise the rural agriculturist stereotype of Quebec, the *habitant*, and to develop a self-conscious society with equitable access to public services across the province. The plan was implemented to combat the genuine disparity the Québécois workers faced due to ethnic distinctions in comparison to their similarly-employed counterparts in the other provinces (Bouchard 1994).

One government institution, the *Ministere des Affaires Culturelles* (MAC), saw the Quiet Revolution as a secularisation movement with vast improvements in health care, education, and the arts, in essence promoting what Giddens (1990) has called a 'modern' social image. The 'modern image' is characterised by the movement of social focus from a rural to urban setting, industrialisation, and national institutions. Also, the 'modern image' marks the general point in the transition of political expression and action. This movement saw the emergence of a more aggressive national action.

Importantly, this new economic and cultural development, and the self-promotion of the modern Quebec image was joined simultaneously by the action of traditionalising

aspects of society, a process Abner Cohen (1979) calls the "traditionalizing effect". He says this process enables a society to have "the potential of creating new traditions as well as maintaining old traditions" whilst change is occurring (1979: 100). These two characteristics, creative development of the new, modern form, and historic preservation, were the primary function of institutions such as the MAC in Quebec (Handler 1988: 81-108). In this manner, any new claims questioning the legitimate form of the Québécois identity requires a claim to the traditional aspect of its use or introduction into the culture at this point. This method of using historic or traditional images is a creative and selective process for advancing agendas. This form of cultural policing demonstrates the role that institutions, under the direction of socially active individuals, play in the promotion of cultural characteristics and their subsequent addition or subtraction from the cultural repertoire. Of note, this symbolic and manufactured image is the reified identity that Handler relies upon for his study.

The MAC advocated improving programs such as public education and increased funding to the fine arts, to facilitate Quebec's move towards a highly organised, modern society, and to raise the image of the traditional cultural identity outside of the province. Handler describes these narratives of modernisation metaphorically, likening Quebec's maturation to the necessary freedom of an adolescent.

In his only mention of Canada and the posture of self-determination in his monograph, Handler (1988) contends that the movement has been so successful that the nationalist sentiment pervades the social life and all strata of the Québécois. He writes of this change, and in the process references Quebec's relationship to the rest of Canada; he states:

> The sovereignty of a nation, it is said, is analogous to the liberty of an adult. When a child grows up his parents must relinquish control over him. Their concession of authority must be total: the freedom of the young adult can not be compromised or shared. Similarly, when a nation comes of age it is entitled to full sovereignty. It is thus nonsense to see the current relationship of Quebec with Canada as a situation in which sovereignty is shared between the federal and

> provincial governments. Sovereignty, like individual freedom, cannot be shared (Handler 1988: 41).

Supporting Handler's use of an organic metaphor to describe the Quebec nation, Lucien Bouchard, the present Premier of Quebec, describes his understanding of the importance of the 1950s. In Bouchard's autobiography (1992), he demonstrates that he is a product of the Quiet Revolution, due to the changes that were instituted by the social policy in the promotion of the arts and humanities. He speaks with an empowered sentiment about the decline of the Duplessis era and the emergence of the burgeoning industrial state [21], he says: "In other words, we had an embryonic state that was completely provincial and amateurish.... In any event, natural forces would eventually bring English Canada to accept the structural changes giving rise to a modern society that was economically strong and politically self-determined" (Bouchard 1994: 42-43). This sentiment is further elaborated by Clift (1982), because he called the Quiet Revolution a change through social growth, marked by the management of a nationalised economy, such as the nationalisation of the Hydro-Quebec power company, contending that the "marginal and static society turned in upon itself" (Clift 1982: 22), demonstrating the self-described modern social identity. As Handler observed, the modern national identity is conceived of as continuous from the older form; and also the natural progression of any society in social evolutionary terms.

The relationship of these two quotations to the term "maturation" by Handler is evident. Many of the people that participated in the changes to Quebec society *believe* that there was a genuine growing process in Quebec identity, and that independence is the natural social progression of a modern nation - hence the metaphor of the maturation of the adolescent. Although the use of the social evolutionary description is meaningful, in no way does this perception of maturation stop the process of culture change. This point is evident when examining the

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[21] Maurice Duplessis was the Premier of Quebec from 1936-39 and from 1944-1959. He advocated strong ties with the Catholic church to maintain and reinforce the Québécois nationalist identity. For more detailed information on various interpretations of his conservative/nationalist regime, see Posgate and McRoberts 1976; Posgate 1978; Verney 1986).

approaches that the political leaders such as Lucien Bouchard currently employ. The "maturation" process is not complete nor static. People within Quebec continue to promote different political agendas and different ideas about the future. Regardless of the accuracy, the suggestion of completion has, the term demonstrates the necessity that nationalist discourse requires for a sense of boundedness. This task is accomplished as the period associated with specific cultural events of change achieves a particular outcome, thus creating a tangible effect on the sentiment associated with the rhetoric and process of change; hence the paradox of a 'quiet revolution'. The "revolution" referring to drastic change; and the "quiet" aspect, intimating that the change was not as dramatic as a revolution is to be expected.

Most economic and materialist accounts of Quebec history note that the time immediately following the Quiet Revolution is the demarcation of Quebec's class consciousness (Sloan 1965; Roussopoulos 1972; Clift 1982; Cole 1984; Fournier 1984). With this in mind, the initial question relating to the role of social agents in political action and the subsequent relationship in determining the direction of culture change will be addressed within this time frame. The following discussion will document the different political techniques employed in the process of Québécois history.

Quebec history has shown many demonstrations and movements to counter the oppressive existence of its relationships within Canada (Roussopoulos 1972; Ouellet 1980; Fournier 1984). These activities, under the rubric of socialism, were important in maintaining the French distinct culture from the dominant Anglo-majority in North America. They were a defensive mechanism for cultural maintenance, as they served to preserve common-law legal system, language, and ultimately the distinct culture of Quebec. The early activities laid the foundation for the offensive political and ethnic movements for separation and autonomy in 1960s Quebec, and coincided with the massive social and socialist movements throughout the world (Touraine 1981; Fournier 1984).

Inasmuch, group agencies such as the FLQ, *Mouvement de Libération du Taxi* (MLT), *Armée de Libération du Québec* (ALQ), *Front d'Action Politique* (FRAP), were a product of the realisation of Québécois class consciousness (Roussopoulos 1972: 50). They were characterised by their aggressiveness and their focus for political radicalisation, especially in comparison to previous social movements. The beginning of the aggressive manifestations was a by-product of the Quiet Revolution; and firmly established the self-identity of the Québécois while promoting their "modern" national identity after the death of Duplessis and the consolidation of capitalist interest in a combination of state, labour, and church initiatives (Cole 1984: 16-9). The significance of these actions is apparent when compared to the change in political techniques employed by the same individuals today, a phenomenon which is discussed below.

As described by Fournier (1984), after the Duplessis regime, the focus of Quebec identity changed from the strong central authority of the Catholic church towards the formation of new political parties, new political agendas, and capitalist expansion. This change was marked by the defeat of the *Union Nationale* led by Maurice Duplessis after almost 17 years of power and the election of the liberal party in 1960. The Liberals were led by Jean Lesage; and their nationalist, reformist, wing was led by René Lévesque, who later founded the separatist *Parti Québécois* (PQ) because of dissatisfaction with securing Quebec nationalism within the Canadian federation.

In September of 1960, three months after the ascent of the Liberal party, a formal organisation was founded to promote and lead the sovereigntist movement. Intellectuals from Ottawa-Hull and Montreal united to form the *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale* (RIN). The formal political sovereigntist movement began; and flourished with popular sentiment, through the promotion of action towards a decolonised and a liberated Quebec. Fournier described the role of the RIN as:

> On the political chessboard at the time, the RIN soon took its place to the left of centre, although it was only mildly socialist. But for most of its supporters, the independence movement was part of the movement

> for a significant transformation of society: large-scale state intervention; some degree of nationalisation; and separation of Church from State (Fournier 1984: 16).

Within the larger sovereigntist movement, smaller, more radical organisations began to form and become active by directing the actions and ideologies of the movement. By 1962 the *Réseau de resistance* was formed, from which several of the younger members would soon form the FLQ. The design of the FLQ was action, radicalisation, and sovereignty; the movement began small but grew to a significant force, rallying around the economically and culturally oppressed position of the Québécois, and the possibilities for an improved future. The sentiment towards changing the system through electoral means, like the PQ advocated, is expressed in the FLQ's manifesto, as were its feelings towards the existing process of parliamentary democracy, which it viewed as corrupt. Section 6 of the manifesto demonstrates the method of revolutionary tactics, it states:

> We believed, once, that it was worth the effort to channel our energies, our impatience which Rene Lévesque expresses so well, within the *Parti Québécois*; but the Liberal victory shows clearly that what is called a democracy in Quebec is, and always has been, nothing but the democracy of the rich... As a result, British parliamentarianism is finished, and the *Front de Liberation du Quebec* will never let itself be diverted by the electoral crumbs which the Anglo-Saxon capitalists toss into the Québécois lower courtyard every four years... (FLQ Manifesto).

When the quotation from the FLQ manifesto is juxtaposed with the preceding quotation by Fournier, the difference is evident. The RIN clearly wanted to change the disparity of their relationship within Canada and North America, and they viewed entering the existing political arena as an acceptable means to achieve their objectives. The FLQ, however, operated under different assumptions. They agreed that the system must be changed, but they believed that the inequality was so entrenched within it that the entire process had to be challenged and ultimately changed.

The FLQ manifesto represented the frustration of the Québécois with the traditional process of political change, and offered an alternative. The leaders of the FLQ thought that the position of all Québécois were inferior to those in the rest of Canada, a claim for which much evidence existed. Economically the businesses that employed the workers of Quebec were primarily Anglo-owned (Clift 1982); and the public sector workers, such as teachers, health care workers, and police were paid considerably less than their Anglo counterparts in the rest of Canada (Handler 1988; Bouchard 1994). The FLQ represented and helped to foster the sentiment of discontent in Quebec, and their political posture outside of Quebec.

Protests and public demonstrations by the FLQ, with the culmination of the kidnapping of the two political leaders, British trade delegate James Richard Cross and Liberal MNA Pierre Laporte, represented an opinion of people in Quebec's popular attitude with their dissatisfaction with the political process. The FLQ drew upon the dissatisfied nationalist sentiment of the public to alter the previously accepted expectations of society. Through the sentiment surrounding the traditions of Quebec history, the FLQ managed to manipulate the cultural symbols, appropriately and alter the range of expectations of Quebecois society.

The radical approach, or the call for social revolution, worked on the simple premise that the foundation of the political house was rotten; and that deconstructing the existing system was necessary before reformation and reconstruction. In many ways, the new social system that the revolutionaries wanted to introduce was socialist; but this focus was superseded by the call for independence. Functionally speaking, the symbolic ramifications of rallying the people around the ideals of socialism and equality drew upon the French historic association; and as well, the historic reference generated the perception of an homogeneous people; one people with one collective voice. This perception was primarily symbolic, as the main objective was to create an autonomous nation, with its future associations left in its own charge. The socialist movement was a means of coalescing the people around a common identity, "the

white niggers," while raising awareness of the poor social conditions of the Quebecois workers.

Although the two strategies described above are not mutually exclusive nor diametrically opposed, they do represent an extreme variation in methodology and approach, as they attempt to satisfy the need for a new response. I believe that these two examples of political action represent two methods of agency in the creation of Québécois identity. The two forms, although they demonstrate a history of tension, political posturing, and a common nationalist goal, do not demonstrate unanimity in action, desires, or ideology, all of which Handler requires for his analysis of Quebec nationalism to be accepted.

At this time, in the larger context of Canadian society, the domination that Quebec was facing was extensive. The authoritative actions of the Federal government, under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau, were immediately devastating to the movement because the terrorist actions were not acceptable. Demonstrating its authority, Ottawa surprised the FLQ and many people throughout Quebec by forcibly controlling all action within the province, by suspending the Canadian Human Rights Act, imposing martial law, and sending in the army to arrest more than 3000 people without charges being brought against them. Clear examples of the tensions and ultimate authority Ottawa demonstrated can be illustrated in a number of interactions which then Prime Minister Trudeau had with the media. Trudeau presented himself and all of Parliament as the legitimate authority in Canada and over Quebec. His statements show the perceived threat that the elected political leaders faced from the challenging power source, and represented and perpetuated the notion of legitimacy of the democratic process had. Trudeau stated in a heated interview immediately prior to the enactment of the War Measures Act, commented about the reduction of civil liberties:

> I think the society must take every means at its disposal to defend itself against the emergence of a parallel power which defies the elected power in this country and I think that goes to any distance. So

> long as there is a power in here which is challenging the elected representative of the people, I think that power must be stopped and I think it's only, I repeat, weak-kneed bleeding hearts who are afraid to take these measures (Trudeau 13 October 1970, from Saywell 1971: 73).

Trudeau's comment represents the control and authority that a "legitimate" power professes. In this form, the comment melds Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic violence", being the "subtle" form of domination with a Weberian sense of violence. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) defines the process of "symbolic violence", as "the gentle, invisible form of violence, misrecognized as such, chosen as much as it is submitted to, the violence of confidence, of personal loyalty, of hospitality, of the gift, of the debt, of recognition, of piety, of all the virtues tied into the ethic of honor" (Bourdieu 1977: 65). Very little can be said about the 'ethic of honour' within it; but, as we shall see, the federal government did not have to enforce the War Measures Act, because the murder of Pierre Laporte exceeded what was culturally appropriate; and the support for the radical movement quickly dissipated. This action was a return to the traditional power dynamic, and the result of the Quebecois' entrenched hegemonic consent to liberal democracy.

The following quotation is an excerpt from the *Montreal Gazette*, and is purported to be the "blueprint for the Quebec Revolution." It depicts the dilemma of the two processes, and accurately describes the difference in each of their approaches in achieving large scale structural change. The excerpt describes the decision and methodology of the FLQ:

> There are not 50 strategies. There are only two: electoral strategy and revolutionary strategy. That is to say they have opted for a revolutionary change in the established order. The strategic objective is clear to all: the destruction of the capitalist society and the construction of an egalitarian, just and free society founded on the practice of collective self-determination at all levels (economic, administrative, school, and cultural) (*Montreal Gazette*, 31 October 1970).

The subversive acts of the FLQ challenged the situation and context of Quebec within Canada and North America, in a bid for cultural survival against the dominant Anglo-economy. This context created a relationship of tension and conflict that was instrumental in generating the nationalist movement, and attempted to undermine the structural position of Quebec's subordination within the dominant Anglo-community. The perception of the conflict, and the genuine potential threat of ethnocide, fuelled the creative response of group cohesion around a common front and against a common threat, socialism and English-speaking Canada respectively. Quebecois nationalism was a product of this context of tension, as the leaders of the community, acting as social agents, unified the people around the cultural symbols.

Thus we see that new political parties such as the PQ were developed to promote change, reforming the existing relationships of society; while the radical, revolutionary movements called for the overthrow of capitalism and the liberation of Quebec from the federation of Canada. The significance is that these two approaches fed off one another. The radical wings of the political party carried out clandestine meetings and acted as terrorists to undermine the authority of the dominant class; the moderate nationalist political parties (the Liberals and then the PQ) meanwhile drew upon the actions of the terrorists to illustrate the discontent of the people. This dual action permitted the radicals such as the FLQ to push the traditional parties' demands even further, through the newly established rules of interaction and behaviour, even though the terrorist and violent actions were primarily performed by a small number of the community. The actions of a few members of the community influenced the entire social perspective, and in the process transcended the existing structure. These social agents were able to perform in this manner because the community could identify with their cause, and also because of their perception that their actions were culturally benevolent. Regardless of the ability of the social agents, they still had to perform within the adjusted *habitus* and work within the rules and expectations of the society, ultimately this expectation was the failure of the FLQ, as the murder of Pierre Laporte removed their popular support.

Although the simultaneous process of radical action and the institutional change by the political parties began as a symbiotic relationship, the two methods necessarily diverged. This break occurred as the differences in principles and approaches could no longer be mediated in the dual systems of clandestine terrorist activities and mainstream traditional political parties; fundamentally the difference in approach was too great, because the basic assumptions pertaining to each method contradicted one another. The break does not imply that there was an extreme homogeneity in thought and action, though. There was and still is enormous breadth in what is considered to be Québécois identity.

Movements depend on competent actors, who can influence the society in a culturally appropriate manner (Keesing 1987). The actors draw on and objectify the symbols of culture; and invent or reinvent, intelligible new symbols with a level of competence (Sherzer 1994). The competence of an actor is measured by the effects he or she has on the society; if the symbols used are appropriated by the people of the community, and to what extent. The directed, or conscious influence of social agents on social structures, through performance and knowledge of cultural texts, is a necessary recurring theme of this discussion.

Cultures change; this is a simple statement but a complex process, whereby the complexity liess in the reasons and mechanisms for the alteration. Antonio Gramsci (1988) contends that all members of society have the potential to think and act critically; however, not all members of the community do indeed perform in this manner, and even fewer have critical awareness and the structural significance to act out this awareness. Gramsci contends that those members of society who do influence others as well as the make-up of society, are termed intellectuals. He states explicitly that the term intellectual" is not reflective of schooling but rather the opposite. Gramsci believed that institutions indoctrinated people with the ideology of the dominant class, and that the education system was as guilty of establishing and maintaining this barrier as any institution. An intellectual requires critical awareness and action to influence and affect the existing structure. Therefore, artists and

farmers, politicians and educators could all be intellectuals within their social milieu; but those intellectuals without structural significance would have to influence many people to be effective. Structural significance can be understood to refer to the position of any person who has the power to influence others within a given community, thus referring to his or her relationship to the society, as well as the cultural competence to influence others (Showstack-Sassoon 1987).

The entire social structure can be understood to exist as a system of culturally-bound rules and expectations that exhibit the process with which people are organised and understood, which Bourdieu (1990) has termed the *habitus*. Similarly, the political process exhibits these same characteristics, as the "system of dispositions to the practice" is accepted as culturally appropriate (*ibid.*: 77). The acceptance of the violence and terrorist activities prior to the murder of Laporte demonstrates that certain rules of society can be broken if performed in what is to be considered a culturally appropriate manner; because these actions were not only tolerated but also encouraged within facets of Quebec society, the entire *habitus* of the Quebecois was considerably altered by the subversive movements, thus challenging the existing power structure of Canada. The actions of the FLQ were considered to be appropriate within a component of Quebec society because of the social context, and because of the actors performing the terrorism generated a sense of acceptance within facets of the community.

The primary theme that patterned the FLQ movement was the challenge to liberal democracy. And although I have argued that the FLQ attempted to undermine the extant elected representation because they believed that the process was fundamentally incapable of permitting the Québécois to realise their autonomy, the basic support for liberal democracy remained and permeated most levels of society. Liberal democracy, as an ideology, expounds belief in participation and accessibility for all members of the society. As such, the dominant class promotes and perpetuates this tenet, ultimately retaining the status quo, and demonstrating the forced hegemonic consent indicative of "symbolic violence."

With respect to Quebec nationalism and the separatist movement, this relationship is representative of the Quebecois acquiescence to the dominant Anglo structural position, relating specifically to the allusion of slavery in Vallières' autobiography. In this manner of "symbolic violence" liberal democracy was a structuring ideology in Quebec during the 1960s (and still is); and the FLQ attempted to challenge the effect it had on the participation of the people, by introducing new and reinvented texts, such as the call for a socialist revolution, into the system of expectations of the nationalists.

There is a diverse history of political posturing and a cacophony of voices emanating from competing social actors within the politics of Quebec nationalism. However, of all of these competing voices, one is now mute. Violence is not an option for political change in Quebec, as the choice for change lies clearly in the motives of democratic social action. The revolutionary rhetoric of the 1960s no longer has a place. As I have shown, the FLQ, as social revolutionaries, were competent at extracting and promoting pertinent and important themes from the entire cultural milieu, what Bourdieu calls "the field of production" (1991: 169), forming their own specific cultural repertoire or niche within the *habitus*. In the past, they transmitted the themes of revolutionary action successfully to the different areas of the province, drawing upon shared traditions. However, presently both separatist parties, the provincial PQ and the federal BQ, and even the lesser known Party for Democratic Socialism, employ a democratic system; and terrorist methods are not condoned. Terrorist tactics and their contribution to the resource pool of political narratives for action is virtually non-existent. Importantly, along with this context of competition, a change in political method has occurred. This methodological shift is frequently referred to as a maturation of Québécois national identity in narratives attempting to legitimise Quebec's current political structure, the primacy of liberal democracy, and international recognition.

In detail, I have demonstrated that individuals have the ability to act and affect the social system within which they work. Also, I have shown that Handler's analysis of

Quebec nationalism misses this place of social actors in this operation of playing out social roles. There is a great history of action and agency in Quebec nationalism, as individuals and groups have acted and reacted against the traditional norms of formal identity-making in Quebec and in Canada. Political parties, nationalist movements, and the Constitutional processes, from their beginning in Canada, have attempted to legislate identity and behaviour; however, and importantly, these attempts have encountered counter-hegemonic dissent, contradiction, and competition at all steps along their formation.

By way of concluding this chapter, the discussion must return to Handler's statement about the cultural semiotic. If culture is grounded and not simply just a semiotic construct, then it is a necessity that we ask, what else is it? As Touraine (1981) argues, culture is social action and history. Thus, we must examine cultural identities as a process of expression; and necessarily embedded in these expressions are the negotiations and construction of the identity through political manoeuvres. Identity creation is a continual process that plays on images of the past, present, and future. The identity is generated through political discourses to define and reify itself.

In Quebec, we see the actions of political radicals, democratic nationalists, and federalists as all part of the identity creation process; specifically, as the shift in action in the radicalism of 1960s to the entrenched liberal democracy of the 1970s marks the continual process in the context and negotiation for recognition within Quebec. In the 1990s we saw First Nations peoples' demands enter the political discourse on recognition and liberty within the context, further illustrating the reality that the context is a process of continual expression and negotiation.

As I introduced this chapter, Michael Herzfeld (1997) suggests that we should move away from the analysis of nationalism in terms of formal organisation and look at the experiences of citizens and their functionaries; and I agree. He says that anthropological analyses are now obligated to move away from the propaganda of the state and rather examine the people; and then, look at people's relationship to the

official doctrine/ideology (1997: 1-2). This approach is a direct criticism of Handler's description of Quebec nationalism, and a shortcoming of his analysis.

Heuristically, Herzfeld offers a switch on the dichotomy between the presentation of seamless national harmony and everyday life and action. Herzfeld says that there are many permutations rather than those presented simplistically as occurring from the top (*ibid.*: 3); and it is the goal of anthropological analysis to examine the processes of the creation of cultural forms, through an understanding of action, agencies, and political interests for those involved. It is the focus of the next chapter to examine some of these permutations.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Primordial Identities

As I have articulated in the preceding chapters, mundane representations of Quebec society, such as the Jazz Festival, are alternate depictions of daily life than what is portrayed in the top-down formulations of national identity. This depiction is certainly a different representation than the extreme cultural forms that are displayed in political rallies, national holiday celebrations, and referenda. Examples of this cultural reductionism are generated by the media, political institutions, and social scientists that essentialise traits and images to produce a simplified likeness of the social context.

This chapter follows a different approach to Quebec nationalism than the reified and simplified identities that are the backbone of Handler's analysis. Following from Herzfeld's comments that ended the last chapter, this section follows from the work of Warren (1993) and her idea of the production of culture from processes of tension. I have studied how this idea translates to the situation of Montreal/Quebec culture, with respect to authoritative discourses and entitlement. This is an important methodological switch to make; examining the dichotomy as a *process* of cultural practices rather than the end product, forces new insights into the relationship of the community. In other words, the focus should be on the relationship of daily life, and how different people and peoples with diverse populations interact together, rather than the forced, essentialised dichotomy of extreme identities.

Specifically, I examine how a textual identity can be legitimated from abstract to concrete codes[22] by focusing on the work of the State to appeal to an enforceable fixed textual identity in both aboriginal and colonial cultures. This form of political action, is the Weberian notion that the state has the monopoly on all forms of legitimate violence – one such form being the creation and enforcement of laws and

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[22] This is where the imposition of the definition of self-determination enters the discussion. The rhetoric of self-determination is a text that becomes codified and is now part of our legal jargon; however, the very means within which the definition is defined and imposed creates a contradiction or paradox to the true meaning of the term.

the discourse surrounding them – and it documents how the state appropriates and censors dissident discourses into its own promotion of natural structure and authority.[23] This authority of the state is achieved by examining how, as Amy Shuman (1992) contends, competing voices challenge the notion of accuracy and claims of authority, while social interaction provides the context for competition and negotiation over entitlement of discourse.[24]

In this chapter, I discuss the creation of legitimate authority through discursive means by contrasting aboriginal and colonial narratives of identity; and then focus the discussion on culture as a product of tension. Guiding this chapter is the question of what terms of identity are used within a given society to influence behaviour. Although all speech is codified in various textual meanings, of particular interest to this discussion is what speech or discourse has the greatest effect on the sanctions, rules, and definitions of identity within a society; and following this point, is the question how are these forms of speech are used to construct an ideological universe that structures behaviour in a legitimate manner. The answer to this question speaks to the notion of ideology and power. The focus of this chapter is to explore the mechanism of influential discourse and the generation of legitimating codes through processes authority discourse in Quebec, by examining primordial narratives of identity.

On a general level, people within societies use terms that can be understood in three ways. Firstly, to communicate a message, the terms must be congruent and *appear* to be logically consistent with cultural norms and historic circumstances; and secondly, terms are used to promote certain interests - as John Austin (1962:48) has argued, speech is used to persuade. Thirdly, the terms may simply be part of codified speech

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[23] This idea is most clearly developed and argued by Foucault (1970, 1984).

[24] An example of the ranges of authoritative discourse, is seen in the media representation of the "Unity" rally in Montreal, a few days before the referendum of 1995. The openly sovereigntist newspaper *Le Devoir* reported that 15, 000 defiant militant federalists converged in Montreal to share their ignorance on the matter of the referendum. Contrastingly, the equally politically transparent English newspaper, *The Gazette*, reported that 150,00-250,000 people rallied for unity, and to share their support for Quebec. Both articles claimed to report the facts of the rally, but they present

that plays out and entrenches social roles.[25] For this discussion, I will not develop the third usage, as I am more concerned about agency rather than playing out a social grammar; but I will explore the first two in detail.

As I argued in the previous chapter, the promotion of interests is not reserved entirely for hegemonic forces in the posturing of identity. Expressions can occur either as a form of suppression, or conversely as a discourse of resistance from subordinate groups. The mechanisms to persuade are functions of power, and can be influential subversively and hegemonically, although their potency tends to lay hegemonically. This process is created when the dialogue of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourse is an expressive dialectic. For example, Jennifer Schirmer (1993) and Michael Taussig (1994) point out, in two complementary articles regarding the "mothers of the disappeared" in Latin America, that women have created a discourse of defiance by refusing to accept terms and 'facts' that the state has forced upon them. Although the women are facing a tremendous propaganda machine, they are only somewhat effective in defying the official State discourse about their missing relatives. Through systematic displays of torture and violence, the State has restricted memory by controlling discourse and appropriating meaningful terms of reference (Schirmer 1993). The fracturisation of community, has permitted the state to utilise the mechanism to move forms of resistance from the collective to the individual, thus effectively diluting the potency of public action and meaning (Taussig 1994). However, , both articles show the women's attempt, even amidst these difficult odds, to create a discourse of defiance through a feature with direct correlation to the notion of the "memory's politics" (Tilley 1995: 244).

The notion of the "memory's politics" is a useful idea at this point. Tilley (1995) describes the memory's politics in terms of effectiveness being dependent on shared memory; and "memory *has* a politics" about it (1995: 244). The "memory's politics" is almost nowhere more evident than in an example of Quebec identity. The

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opposite versions of what went happened. Both of these sources can claim to present an authoritative discourse on the situation; but, because I was there, I, too, can claim such authority.

[25] As in the work of William Labov (1966) and Erving Goffman (1954).

repetitive conditioning which many of the people experienced in forming an aspect of their self-identity was their manufactured common memory of experience, a characteristic that permeates all levels of Québécois society. To display an excellent example of this point, one must look no further than their national motto, *Je me souviens*. Literally, by enforcing the individual memory to reflect on a previous time and effectively stretching back the collective memory, it serves to provide an inclusive "historic" community. The individual remembers; but more importantly, all members of the society share the idea of the same historic memory. The solidarity that is created can be built on real or imagined bases, using the appropriate symbols to rally the people into a cohesive force directing the texts into the community (Connerton 1989). In time this collective community becomes symbolic in its own right, as the text of the movement is continuously recreated through oral traditions, popular culture, and other cultural practices (Herzfeld 1987).

The most illustrative point of this process of the memory's politics with respect to Quebec's national motto is the part of the sentence that has been omitted, of which the original line reads: *Je me souviens que je suis né sous la fleur de lys mais j'ai fleuri sous la rose*.[26] Both flowers metaphorically represent Quebec and England respectively, and when presented together create a very different meaning to the words *Je me souviens* than what the motto stands for and now means today.

The question that I want to ask regarding political memory, is whether a society or cultural forms exist *a priori* to the social memory. In other words, does the collective imagination of a society determines its existence; or does a core exist that this memory stems from? Foreshadowing the concluding argument, I must refer to the work of Daniel Salée (1995), who writes that "a culture inevitably evolves and adapts, and does not, as a result, necessarily lose its relevance as a defining space around and within which its members find their bearings" (Salée 1995: 293). Thus, there is a sense of a dynamics within the cultural realm; but the change does not

[26] I remember that I was born under the *fleur de lys* but I flourished under the rose.

necessitate the conclusion that *all* cultures and societies are objectifications and not grounded, as Handler concludes as the salient features of nationalism.

Returning the discussion to competing discourses, of which the dominant ones come to be the hegemonic social memory, necessitates a focus on where and how discourses interact. Falk-Moore (1994) contends that analysing the mediation of opposing discourses and discourses of defiance provides a point of intersection between the power structures of society. She says that the intersection becomes manifest in legal structures, in which ideas such as customary and traditional law have legitimating effects and compete with colonial jurisprudence (Falk-Moore 1994: 277-9). Ultimately, these terms must have a modicum of legitimacy to be effective and appropriated by the people within the society; but if we accept John Austin's premise that a purpose of speech is to influence, an important outcome is achieved. Necessarily the discussion of legitimacy speaks to notions of power and ideology, and I will now explore these concepts.

Max Weber (1992) says that in everyday life, relationships are governed by the combination of custom (value-rational authority) and the material calculation of advantage (purposeful-rational authority). However, these two reasons do not fully explain domination and voluntary compliance to all situations (Weber 1992: 224-5). Normally there is a belief in the legitimacy of the relationships that results from their manifestations, and this process is understood as Weber's definition of ideology (Eagleton 1991: 98). In Weber's dialectic relationship of domination and submission, which ultimately generates a relationship of authority, he asserts that one of the three forms of authority is "legal authority" which produces a desirable and bureaucratic system to deal with conflicts in a consistent and objective manner. According to Weber, legal authority is rooted in the organisation of the bureaucratic system; and the institution is considered to be rational and impartial.

In response to the claim that law (in the State law or authoritative discourse sense) is rational or objective, many authors make strong and compelling critiques of Weber's

naïve faith.[27] As an example of this critical literature, I have chosen to refer to Starr and Collier's statements from their introduction to theedited volume, *History and Power in the Study of Law* (1994), because it provides a simple critique of this notion but more importantly a place to further the analysis. They say that legal orders create asymmetrical power relations and therefore the law is not neutral, as Weber (1992:7) contends; further, they say that law is politically active as a symbolic representation of interests of particular groups - especially groups in power (Starr and Collier 1994: 24). However, and importantly, they also contend that it is insufficient simply to contend that legal structures create a normative system; and researchers must look at specific examples of the process and implications of such a process (*ibid.*: 6).

Further to this point regarding the example of legal texts in studying the mechanism of authoritative discourse, Austin (1962: 36) contends that they provide an excellent opportunity to examine overt and definitive procedures executed by all members of society. Legal texts provide a public and supposedly concrete code of sanctions and expectations. Correctly, Austin points out that the legal texts are not the only or supreme code of behaviour for a society; but that they provide an observable medium to demonstrate the mechanisms of how certain texts are codified and used to influence people within a society.

Starr and Collier state that law can be viewed "as a contested metaphor that represents and reproduces a social and symbolic ordering system and that changes as groups of human agents seek new social forms" (1994: 25); and as stated above about Falk-Moore's notion that legal interplay provides the medium for the explicit intersection, mediation, and exchange in negotiation for authority and power. With respect to Austin's notion of legal texts providing a backdrop to focus the mechanisms of social influence, and Starr and Collier's comments for contrast, I will now explore two cultural texts that have been invented and manipulated to promote and maintain legitimacy within Quebec. The texts I will explore are essentialised cultural forms and primordial narratives of identity, which will be the focus of the rest of this thesis.

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[27] See for example Valerie Kerruish's *Jurisprudence as Ideology* (1992).

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In early 1996, I was at an anthropology department talk at McGill University and I had the opportunity to be entirely offended by Professor Robert Paine of Memorial University. In the space of one hour, he had managed to appropriate almost all terms of self-identity that First Nations Peoples in Canada employ; he stated, and rather emphatically at that, that the Québécois were native to Quebec - that they were natives - and he made the bold assertion that they were indigenous peoples.

Paine made a dramatic and contentious point. He had demonstrated the connection of a people to their perceived land, and how the terms they use to identify themselves are emotive and legitimating. This appropriation of terms of identity has enormous implications for the Québécois identity because their claim undermines those of First Nations peoples. The notion of the *habitant* as 'he who tills the soil,' and the ideology of naturalness that nationalist sentiment either houses or creates, legitimate a claim to an overlapping space. Referring once again to Handler (1988), he describes the process as:

> A living individual is one, precisely delineated with reference to a spatial and temporal environment. In other words, it is bounded in space, continuous in time, and homogeneous within those spatiotemporal boundaries. Metaphors of the collective individual and national species establish the individuated being of the Québécois nation (1988: 50).

Narratives of identity such as these have a direct influence on legal discourse and social relationships. They are a mechanism for legitimating relationships; and when the ideologies are naturalised and internalised, they rationalise actions and relationships by providing structures of legitimate authority (Bourdieu 1990: 79).[28] Furthermore, with narratives of tradition, in which a peoples' connection to historic and prehistoric times is lengthened, their claims to legitimate control of the contested space is strengthened (Eller and Coughlan 1993; Foster 1991). If the narrative can be

extended to a primordial existence, then it legitimates the identity to the "ineffable" characteristic of ethnicity that I will discuss below.

Robert Young (1995) says that our need to create organic metaphors of identity under the guise of purity and homogeneity runs in counter-sense to the way that identities exist (i.e., we are not pure). Furthermore, Young states that "[t]oday's comparative certainty has arisen because heterogeneity, cultural interchange and diversity have now become the self-conscious identity of modern society" (1995: 4). However, there is a need to naturalise our existence; and the narrative of natural existence may be seen as a mechanism to generate a natural order, as the social ramifications of this belief permits the rationalisation and ideological justification to the imposition of arbitrary rules on subordinate people and peoples within a society. In reference to ideology naturalising social relationships and possibly oppressive social relationships, Terry Eagleton (1991) describes one of the roles of ideology as:

> Successful ideologies are often thought to render their beliefs natural and self-evident – to identify them with the 'common sense' of a society so that nobody could imagine how they might be different. This process, which Pierre Bourdieu calls *doxa*, involves the ideology in creating as tight a fit as possible between itself and social reality, thereby closing the gap into which the leverage of critique could be inserted. Social reality is redefined by the ideology to become coextensive with itself, in a way which occludes the truth that the reality in fact generated the ideology. Instead, the two appear to be spontaneously bred together... On this view, a ruling ideology does not so much combat alternative ideas as thrust them beyond the very bounds of the thinkable. Ideologies exist because there are things which must at all costs not be thought, let alone spoken. (Eagleton 1991: 58)

In 1973, in an essay titled "The Politics of Ethnonationalism", Walker Conner contends that the right to national self-determination is a narrative that oppressed or threatened groups invoke to demonstrate a certain legitimacy in international discourses (1973: 3). Considering identity, Richard Jenkins (1994) argues that ethnicity is a form of legitimisation that leads to nationalism in contemporary

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[28] Bourdieu calls this successful naturalisation 'Doxa'.

discourses. Following the lead of Barth (1966) and Foucault (1970), Jenkins (1994: 20) demonstrates that although ethnicity is historical in context (1994: 209-16), it is situationally defined and produced in the course of social transactions, thus creating boundaries of delineated space. The process of ethnicity being defined "transactionally" is described as a dialectical process mediated by internal and external identities. For Jenkins, the 'internal' identity is indicative of a self-defined "group," and relates directly to the belief in a natural and unquestionable self-identity. Not surprisingly, the "external" identity is characterised by an outsider's definitions; and is indicative of a phenomenological "category", although the definition may in fact be derived consensually, and follow the internal definition of self. The transactional definitions of categories are "necessarily embedded within social relationships," and are defined instrumentally through mechanisms of power (*ibid.*: 198-200).

Undoubtedly, we have perceptions of reality that have been perpetuated through the processes of phenomenalisation. These notions can be easily traced to images and conceptions of purity. Metaphors of purity and hybridity make sense on two levels. Firstly, people identify themselves within categories of race, ethnicity, religion, nation, and state; and secondly, these categories are frequently taken as natural entities, because we essentialise things when we view and then speak about them. For example, one of Handler's informants responded to the question, "What is it that makes a person Québécois?" by stating:

> Any inhabitant of Quebec is Québécois, if you want the broad definition. But the Québécois - that more likely would be the people who have been here a stretch of time. Certainly in theory any person residing in Quebec is Québécois. But the popular mentality holds that the Québécois are those who have been established here for a long time. And generally, the Québécois speak French and have a certain way of looking at life. When you talk about the Québécois you're talking about francophones who are nationalist and who hold to their heritage, culture, customs, and traditions. It's more like that, the Québécois (1988: 33).

And similarly, someone explained to me that he could never be a Québécois because, although his ancestors had emigrated to Quebec several generations earlier and he had lived in Quebec all of his life, he was English and could "never" be appropriated into the French-Quebec culture. These examples demonstrate the process of further "fine-tuning" the definition for being included as a Québécois through an expanding number of categories and increasingly specific characteristics that define the non-Québécois.

Phenomena, or things, are placed into categories, either "this" category or "that" category, in an attempt to understand them in an ordered and intelligible manner - and cultures are not exempt from this process. It is a method of generating order to create structure. In this manner, notions such as "hybridity" necessitate a pure form, from which the hybrid was synthesised. In dialectical terms, the "impure" requires a "pure" to have meaning; or, as Young (1995) states simply, "multiplicity must be set against at least a notional singularity to have any meaning... identity is self-consciously articulated through setting one term against the other" (1995: 4). Further to this idea, and returning to dominant Western ideology of which Handler claims nationalism is an example, Murphy (1971) says,

> Positivism has encouraged us to look upon social life as having a natural order, but this need not mean that it is physical and amenable to the same techniques of investigation as matter. Many things are happening together in social transactions, and the artifice that reduces the events to units must necessarily distort them. The distortion is almost invariably in a simplistic direction, and the aspect of reality that we sort out as distinctive and substantive may only be the one that has been predetermined for us by convention, either our own or that of the subjects of our study. This is the essence of 'common sense' (1971: 45).

Thus, returning to Paine and his appropriation of First Nations self-reference terms, the point that I cull from his words is important, as his appropriation was premeditated and intentioned to raise a worthy point. Paine's manipulation of the terms "native" and "indigenous" speaks to questions of legitimacy. It isn't satisfactory just to comment that his purposeful appropriation was offensive; the

better and harder question to ask and answer, is why is it offensive and what makes it wrong? On a certain level, the answer to the question is simply that aboriginal peoples - as a set of separate nations- were here (in Canada or Quebec - however you wish to look at the question) first; and they have an inalienable right to live on the land; in a manner that is commensurate with any autonomous people. However, both the Québécois and the First Nations peoples claim title to the same piece of land; and all of the groups that claim the land invoke narratives of original occupant status to legitimate their claim. But invoking the notion of a pure ethnic form is complicated and potentially dangerous, and the logic of primordialism is contentious at best. I will explain why there is this complexity, and why there must be a way to recognise legitimacy in cultural forms, in the coming pages in a comparison of the overlapping narratives of identity in Quebec.

Regarding narratives of identity, George Scott (1990) states that there are two reasons for an ethnic group's solidarity. He lists the reasons for ethnic solidarity leading to national boundaries as 1) primordial affinities; and, 2) social circumstance. The former reason he says, is the "ineffable affective significance", especially in relation to the "group's distinctive past." In many ways this is the mechanism of the memory's politics, described earlier. The latter explanation reasons that structural conditions enhance ethnic solidarity through a "rational, strategic selection of ethnic identity," in pursuit of political, economic, and social goals (1990: 148). The first example is characterised by psychological and innate individual qualities, while the second is determined by its agency, what Scott calls 'behavioural' circumstance (*ibid.*: 148-9). I will now trace briefly the argument of primordialism in the academic literature.

In response to Scott's article, and more so with respect to his benign stance on the issue of primordialism, Eller and Coughlan (1993) submitted a scathing denunciation of the term "primordialism" to the *Journal of Race and Ethnic Studies*. Because Scott ultimately argues for a combination of the two approaches to understand identity, by stating "neither of them alone is *sufficient* as such an explanation; a sufficient

explanation, in other words, must include *both* approaches" (1990: 149), Eller and Coughlan argue vehemently against this intellectual fence-sitting. As Scott says, "these two approaches have been treated as if they were mutually exclusive: if ethnic attachments are primordial, they cannot be circumstantial; if they are circumstantial they cannot be primordial" (*ibid.*: 149). Thus in response to this simple logical conundrum that Scott acknowledges and backs himself into, Eller and Coughlan state:

> Furthermore, recent literature in the field is replete with studies of ethnic group identities and behaviours that illustrate the socially-constructed nature of such collectivities and activities. Interestingly, analysts often cling to primordialism in spite of this evidence, forcing themselves into empirical and theoretical binds... ethnicity, like any emotional attachment, is born out of social interaction, [and] ... the entire structure of primordialist analysis has been built on a approach to affect; and we shall conclude that there are logically no circumstances in which ethnicity can be described as primordial (1993: 184).

Clearly they find the fault in the logic of primordialist arguments significant. Eller and Coughlan contend that the notion of primordialism in the anthropological literature was influenced by three theorists: Nock (1933), Shils (1957), and Geertz (1963). The theorists define primordialism in two complementary ways. They say that primordialism is defined as "first created or developed;" and secondly as, "primeval - from the beginning" (*ibid.*: 186). From the three major contributors to the understanding on the subject, they deduce three "characteristics of primordialism." They say primordialism is:

1) *a priori*, underived, *ab origine*, and *causa sui*;
2) ineffable, over-powering, shared, and simultaneously, variable; and
3) affective - characterised by emotional attachments, bonds, feelings, sentiments (*ibid.*: 187).

They then systematically pick apart these characteristics to demonstrate that there is no logical explanation for a claim of primordial identity. First, they point to a problem within Geertz's analysis of common symbols being innate and shared for all members of the group; they contend that if symbols are innate, they should be equally shared by all members of the group. This criticism contends that if the symbol is

primordial, then it should have the same meaning through the entire society and across all social strata. The citizenry and the leaders would have to have to the same understanding of the symbols, and clearly this does not happen, as leaders, frequently have the discursive cultural knowledge and the ability to manipulate the rhetoric competently in culturally significant ways (Scott 1990: 153). Similarly, this innate understanding of symbols is assumed by Handler; and I have attempted to demonstrate that the symbols of the reified culture he uses as his account of essentialised Quebecois culture are not uniform, but rather they are a product created by social actors.

Secondly, Eller and Coughlan point out that primordial identities have to be solicited by a response to a social situation. They are "engendered by context" (1993: 190); or similarly, as Scott says, "the greater the degree of opposition - economic, political, social, religious, or some combination thereof - perceived by an ethnic group, the greater the degree of historic distinctiveness will be aroused - and hence the greater its solidarity" (1990: 161). This characteristic renders the definition meaningless because it is an oxymoron. Simply, to paraphrase Scott (1990:152-61), if an entity is primordial, by definition it cannot be a product of social circumstance and *vice versa*.

Continuing this line of thought, Eller and Coughlan postulate that primordialism may actually be a "unique strength of emotional attachments commanded by ethnic movements that derive their appeal from cultural and symbolic phenomena rather than material interests" (1993: 196). The result here is similar to Handler's semiotic understanding, although their analysis is highly agent-oriented. Their analysis is interesting but they make an overly bold assertion to contend that in *all* cases *all* peoples are invoking a cultural narrative and inventing an identity to advance some political, social, or economic gain. Although I think there is some truth to their assertion, it clearly and consciously denies that "ineffable" quality of kin and blood, and the emotional force that is fuelling many current conflicts throughout the world.[29]

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[29] Michael Ignatieff's *Blood and Belonging* (1993) discusses the Quebec nationalism issue as well as the Serbia-Kosovo situation with clarity and foresight.

Eller and Coughlan argue that ethnicity is an affect issue, thus making it distinct from purely instrumental issues and not reducible entirely to economic and political means; however, they emphatically contend that this situation of effectiveness does not make *any* identity primordial in *any* instance. They say:

> Primordialism presents us with a picture of underived and socially-unconstructed emotions that are unanalysable and overpowering and coercive yet varying. A more unintelligible and unsociological concept would be hard to imagine, and furthermore, from a variety of sources – including sociology, anthropology, and psychology – material has emerged in recent years that renders the concept theoretically vacuous and empirically indefensible. If we look at primordialism more deeply in the light of its three aspects and of recent scholarship, we should find sufficient cause to discard this concept, at least in this primitive sense, permanently (Eller and Coughlan 1993: 187).

However vacuous the term 'primordial' is, Eller and Coughlan do admit that the attachment surrounding the discourse is emotive and real. When the emotional feeling is conjoined with the directed "memory's politic," a defensive, mechanistic identity may emerge to help define contentious borders of interaction. For example, Segal (1995) says that in Europe there is the claim of primordialism because boundaries are contentious; contrastingly, nationalisms in North American are unique in their pseudo-inclusivity *and* the fact that they do not claim primordial status. Assuming that the American situation is the benchmark for North America, he says that in the United States, there is conscious dissociation with the past, in the Founding Father's legacy. In this instance, the borders are not contentious; and thus there is no need to invoke myths (Segal 1995).

Although Segal's account is appropriate for the majority cultures in the United States and Canada, clearly he misses two perspectives in his generalisation, that of the Québécois and the First Nations peoples in Canada. Both the Québécois and the First Nations peoples have somewhat of a genesis myth occurring within the same space. The primordial narrative, in these latter instances, is that "ineffable" status used in

cases of extreme defence. Walker Conner's contribution to this argument (1973: 3) bears repeating. He contends that the right to national self-determination is a narrative that oppressed or threatened groups invoke to demonstrate a certain legitimacy in international discourses; and to contend that one's identity is unquestionably legitimate enforces this stance. It is the trump card that is invoked when the situation is so bleak that the peoples involved can not trust their claim to be denied. What better claim to make than one that is unspeakable and thus unquestionable? As Eagleton (1991) says in reference to Bourdieu's notion of 'doxa,' if the idea and reality are an incredibly tight fit, there is no leverage to critique the original idea. For example, in Quebec the Québécois have invented this rhetoric of the *habitant* breaking the soil, through their close proximity (at least historically and nostalgically) to the land. While the First Nations peoples have a more legitimate, but still very problematic, claim within these definitions to primordial status, the narrative of natural identity stemming from the specific place of Quebec overlaps between these groups.

Narratives of territory and space also permit a relationship on an ideological level. Culture traits such as religion, language, and customs are often described and understood with their relation to the land, and the belief that these characteristics can only truly be understood within the context of the environment. Therefore, an example would be the image and association of the *habitant*, as described below by Dion (1992), illustrating the relationship of the cultural image and historic identity with the land, in Quebec. The "homeland," or at least the notion of the homeland, has a "mythical and subjective quality" that manifests itself in feelings of nostalgia and spiritual connectedness whereby the *ethnie* is considered to be as much a part of the land as the land is a part of them (Smith 1991: 23). This physicalness is significant in establishing a relationship between the people and their narratives because it adds tangibility to their discourses and political agendas. Thus, not only is there a materialist incentive to their land base, there is a subjective quality that allows people to point to their place on the map and claim it as their own. Leon Dion (1992) describes this relationship of the land to the people of Quebec as:

> Among the many incarnations of the Québecer - trapper, explorer, lumberjack, habitant, settler, sharecropper, farmer, bourgeois - it is the habitant, or the one who clings to his land, who until today has stood out. The habitant of former times, whose memory lives on in our poets and singers, had a great dream: to conquer the forest, to build a country, to preserve it and extend it to all points of the compass.
>
> Clinging to the earth was one way of ensuring the survival of Quebec as a nation. Small wonder, then, that it was in novels about the earth that the main themes of the Quebec homeland were laid down for posterity. As Giuseppe Turi writes, "Québecers feel an almost visceral need to identify with the soil of Quebec" (Dion 1992: 81).

To counter the distinction of the characteristics of ethnic identities that were developed by Jenkins, Ahmed, Eller and Coughlan, and Scott above, aboriginal identities are different. As Michael Levin (1993) states:

> Aboriginality is a more refined claim to distinctiveness [than an ethnic identity] based on historical experience. It emphasizes status as the *original occupants of a place*, adding depth to the idea of cultural differences. The use of aboriginality as a basis for ethnonational claims does not have the universalism of ethnic claims and is restricted to those places 'discovered' by Europeans after 1492 in both the Old and New Worlds. As well as a basis for ethnonational claims, it is *also* a claim *against immigrant groups* (1993: 4-5; emphases mine).

In reference to the section of the passage that is emphasised, it is purposeful to underscore that "original" not only means first but also creative. This definition has interesting implications for criticisms of the oxymoron of invented-primordial identities. And, especially in respect to the second section that is emphasised, the original occupants are set against the newcomers - the immigrants. Thus aboriginality is set in oppositional terms of identity creation, but it has a more intelligible definition that makes its criterion possible to satisfy.[30] For example, Bruce Trigger (1995) says

> The first enduring European settlement within the present borders of Canada was not established until 1608, and in 1663 there were still only 3,000 Europeans living in New France, no more people than constituted a small Iroquoian tribe. Moreover, these Europeans

[30] Métis and the issue of native blood percentages opens up the entire problem again.

> remained dependent on goods imported from France, many did not intend to remain in the colony, and those who did were only slowly learning to adapt to life in the New World. Yet, at that time, every part of Canada was settled by native peoples who possessed cultures that had evolved over thousands of years and that were adapted to a variety of environments. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the French were in contact with natives groups totalling more than 125,000 people. Not only their numerical superiority but also their knowledge and skills allowed native Canadians to play a far different role during the heroic period than history books have ascribed to them (1985: 29).

Trigger's detailed ethnohistory of the contact period provides evidence for aboriginal peoples' claims to being the first occupants; and within a reasonable understanding, having primordial status. Securing their legitimate claim because of first and continual occupation, provides aboriginal peoples with aboriginal rights. Asch says:

> aboriginal rights can be described as encompassing a broad range of economic, social, cultural, and political rights. Of these, it appears that the notion of a land base within a separate political jurisdiction is fundamental. These rights flow, first of all, from the fact that the aboriginal peoples were in sovereign occupation of Canada at the time of contact, and secondly from the assertion that their legitimacy and continued existence has not been extinguished by the subsequent occupation of Canada by immigrants (1988: 30).

Tying up this argument, Mathew Coon-Come, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, articulates the position of aboriginal peoples in Quebec and the issue of the competing narratives of primordial status. He says:

> Quebec has invented the concept of English Canada, and English Canada has accepted the myth of an English and French Canada. Meech Lake described a Canada based on a falsehood, the racist notion of two founding peoples. The debate once again attempts to push the real founding people, the first peoples entirely aside. I understand the reason for this. Canada has an unsavoury history in its relations with my people. While the French and the English are arguing about which of them came first, they both know that their arguments fail when they are forced to confront the truth... Indigenous people lived in Canada and governed themselves for thousands of years before the spoilers of this land came here and began squabbling among themselves. It is ironic that these people do not want to recognize our existence and rights now. It is because our presence

> spoils their arguments. That is why Canada prefers to make this a debate between English and French (1992: 3).

Once again we see the essentialist distinction of the French-English split; but in this instance Coon-Come asserts that this categorisation achieves the negation of native peoples in the formulation. This negation is an attempt to persuade the discourse to entrench the notion of two founding peoples in Canada.

Aboriginal identity may, at times, be characterised by instrumental action to strengthen identities during times of tension and contention, especially in self-interest promotions in social, political, economic, and cultural arenas. In returning to the theme that culture is not just *of* the ground, but is *on* the ground for the people involved in its acting out everyday, analyses of identity discourses must demonstrate a responsibility to those people who are involved in this process. This action and manipulation in not just a simple game, as there is a genuine urgency in native nationalism, as illustrated by the

> reality that for Native peoples, unlike English, African, Asian, or French-Canadians, each community is the locus of a unique culture... Quebec nationalism is predicated on the goal of preserving the French language in North America, a legitimate goal but one that pales in consideration of the fact that any further erosion of Mohawk culture and language would bring the Mohawk nation to the brink of extinction (Alfred 1995: 191).

Instrumental action is not unusual for any ethnic group to take, and this characteristic should not be the one to remove an ethical legitimacy from the claim. The aboriginal peoples of Canada in their claim to primordialism preclude the criticisms outlined by Eller and Coughlan, Scott, and Jenkins that I listed above – Aboriginal peoples are aboriginal. They are the first residents and owners of the land, and to suggest that they are not or that they did not own the land before settlement can only be concluded through racist argumentation.

Given the arguments of long-term occupation of the land, how do the Québécois use these narratives to appropriate the primordial identity and manipulate the terms into a meaningful and successful ideology (as Eagleton says) that carries a form of legitimacy? What must not be forgotten is that the reason for the Québécois claim to being the original habitants, the *habitant*, who has broken the soil of Quebec, is consistent with the reasoning of other colonial cultures. They can make this claim only if they assume (and wrongly so) that no people occupied the land before them. Because the Québécois have been colonised themselves does not excuse or absolve them of the social contract that they have with other nations.

What I have argued thus far is that the narratives of identity which a society employs through instrumental means have varying degrees of legitimacy. These techniques attempt to influence a certain behaviour or achieve a certain result, the success of which is generally achieved through relationships of power.

The narratives of identity and legitimisation in Quebec are constructed and invented through social circumstance, and the narratives and resulting discourses help generate legitimacy for the people espousing them in opposition to the competing groups. The very terms that underpin the significance of the discourses are contentious, open to appropriation, and ultimately reified through the political control of institutions by including the narrative or censoring it in the dominant discourses of Quebec society.

CONCLUSION:
Some Thoughts on Recognition

In this thesis I have mapped out a long process. I began by introducing the authoritative anthropological account of Quebec nationalism, by Richard Handler. Handler's work demonstrates the top-down processes of the formation of nationalist ideology. He illustrates the metaphors that are present in these accounts of national identity, and how they naturalise people into their socio-cultural community. This description of the natural being of the nation is consistent with other nationalist movements. I argued that when the appearance of the nation as a natural being is achieved, this result is indicative of a successful political movement (Foster 1991).

Handler outlines five features of nationalism that distinguishes one nation from another. He argues that the nation is an individual, with a natural life process that is determined through metaphors. In his formulation, Handler contends that cultures and societies are objectifications and therefore real only in the sense of the observer perceiving and thus creating them. In this analysis, culture is not grounded; but is imagined and invented *a priori*.

Handler contends that the nation is established through metaphors; however, in drawing from the work of Alain Touraine, I argued that the nation is established through the action of individuals and groups through history. I showed the diversity of Quebec nationalism and how political discourses have been used in a continual process of identity creation, unlike the mere replication of the official state ideology. The existence of this diversity questions the accuracy and fairness of Handler's depiction of Quebec nationalism.

I argued, in turn, that Handler's analysis was descriptive of the essentialised national identities in Quebec, particularly surrounding the events of political manifestations. It is true that in certain political events, the Durkheimian notion of the *conscience collective* is an accurate description of the heightened identities that are on display at this time. However, focussing on these rare and essentialised identities does an

injustice to the quotidian life of the people involved. Unlike Handler contends, culture is grounded for the people who rely on their changing but historically continuous world view and actions to make sense of social life. For my analysis, living in Montreal during the referendum of 1995 allowed for an easy focus on these essentialised identities. The red and blue identities of the political dichotomy of federalism and nationalism were plentiful, but it was not until I ruminated on the situation for some time that I came to realise that at the end of each day people lived with, are still married to, and are friends with those from the 'other side.' Clearly, it is not that politics makes strange bedfellows, but life processes.

Secondly, I demonstrated that relying on the Durkheimian understanding of ritual process and the supra-individual identity of the *conscious collective* describes political movements as agentless and self-perpetuating. In the third chapter I demonstrated that there is a strong and diverse history of agency in manufacturing Quebec identity, and once again relying on the essentialised forms of these identities performs a violent act against those people who live within the system. Because of these problems, culture, and the production of identities surrounding it, must be examined as a process. Extreme manifestations of display are not the best representative of cultural identity, and thus a Durkheimian focus is limiting in providing an adequate picture of the context of the display of this manifestation.

Outlining the production of culture as a process rather than an essentialised or instrumental identity provides a freedom for the subsequent analysis, and this freedom is necessary to understand the politics of national identities in Quebec. As Alfred (1995) says:

> The dominant question in studies of nationalism and political identity has been primordialism versus instrumentalism. One perspective sees unbroken tradition and continuity with the past, while the other sees conscious manipulation of traditions and cultural inventions in the emergence of nationalist ideologies. Both are in fact wrong because in spite of their disagreement they represent an essentialist fallacy either way. There is no simple answer to the question, 'Do ideologies,

> peoples, nations, cultures change or not?' They of course change – and they do not (Alfred 1995: 188).

In Alfred's depiction, understanding national identity as a process is useful. He describes Mohawk identity as "nested," and as such it cross-cuts the socio-political sphere of dynamic contexts (*ibid.*: 18-9). The fact that the situations for this context change through time, does not delegitimatise the claims. As Salée says:

> Even though the ancestral customs and practices do not today have all the authenticity which had given a legitimate basis to Aboriginal territorial claims, and even though their inclusion in the discourse may in the final analysis only mask a degree of political opportunism, they do not lose any of their pertinence within the dynamic of the Aboriginal question. The ancestral customs and practices, however thin they may wear in some cases, serve as ideological mooring where the collective imagination can anchor and elaborate a concrete identity (1995: 305).

This is a much different picture than what Handler has drawn for the existence of national identities. The claims of primordial status are used for a reason; but there are varying degrees to their legitimacy, and the context must be elucidated. What is important for anthropology in this analysis is not to make a hasty judgement. For the people and peoples involved in these displays, the discourse is representative of the context of the political situation; and the political situation is very grounded in its effects.

Finally I examined the context of primordialism in Quebec's narratives for the nationalist movement. By tracing the academic literature on primordial identities, I showed the pervasive idea that all cultures, regardless of what is claimed, were instrumental in their formulation. I contrasted the use of primordial narratives between Québécois and First Nations peoples, and I argued specifically that the assertion that cultural genesis is achieved only through instrumental action undermines First Nations peoples legitimate claims to self-determination; and further, to deny First Nations claims to aboriginal status is to deny history and to invoke racist concepts, such as *terra nullius*. In this literature, the instrumental action of identity

creation is necessarily highly agent-oriented, unlike the description analysis that Handler provides of Quebec nationalism; and the ramifications to the people involved are certainly grounded in real terms.

What these differences mean, however, is that there is a deep need to ameliorate these claims for recognition, the differences that they entail, and the dissatisfaction that minority peoples share with the limiting structures of liberal democracy. Both First Nations and Quebec nationalisms share the similarity that they must work within the system that is or has oppressed them. By appealing to the political and cultural institutions that have systematically harmed them, they are forced to seek recognition for their survival amidst a context that is interested in limiting the emergence of parallel political powers. The ramifications of this situation are disheartening. As Alfred says, "The most sober and informed Quebec intellectuals have a pessimistic view of the prospect of reconciling Mohawk and Quebec nationalism. The consensus is that the institutional structure of Canadian federalism precludes the satisfaction of both Native and Quebec nationalistic goals" (Alfred 1995: 17).

The philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) has a more optimistic view of the relationship, however. In his seminal work, "The Politics of Recognition" (1994), Taylor points to the inclusion, or the potential for the inclusion of aboriginal communitarian ideals and liberal democratic representation. This synthesis of the two different perspectives depends upon the recognition of diversity and plurality within the community (Salée 1995: 305). Immediately, depicting the relationship in this way leads back to the discussion on cultural and legal syncretism; and the problems inherent in this assumption should be apparent. The law, like the relationship of "contact," has a history, and is shaped by actors who are trying to persuade to achieve some end or gain. Quebeckers, Québécois, and First Nations peoples are trying to achieve this recognition to various ends, but what remains a constant that at the core of this interest is the survival of their respective culture amidst a dominant majority within a liberal democratic system.

In conclusion, I must say that I do not know the answer to this problem of the multi-nations-state in Canada. Although it is contended that independence is the ultimate goal of every nationalist movement, this is not generally the case of Native nationalism in Canada. However, Native nationalism is still viewed as an emergent parallel power and a threat to the authority of the federal state of Canada, and to Quebec. Until this obstacle is overcome, the discussions will continue to be fruitless.

Certainly a goal for many people within Quebec is separation. Historically, through the action of the separatists, whether radical or democratic, it is still viewed as a threat to Canada's integrity and legitimacy. Any political action promoting the autonomy of Quebec will be viewed as the emergence of a parallel power; and, unfortunately, a respectful dialogue would be impossible with the current relationships of the nations involved.

I have shown in this thesis is that there are desires to have cultural differences recognised within Canada, and through history the liberal democratic model has shown to have holes in its abilities to recognise adequately the politics of difference in the country. The liberal democratic model, espoused by Taylor, does not recognise that the very premise of recognition of minorities is a subtle form of authority. If a minority people is forced to submit to the juridico-political structure of the majority for recognition of its distinctiveness, then it still maintains the status of minority and will be subject to the will and prejudices of the majority.

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